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ISSUE 102

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A 15th century depiction of Saladin capturing Jerusalem in 1187

Welcome

The history of the Crusades is dominated by analysis from the Christian side of the story, but thankfully we're seeing the Muslim side of this conflict articulated more and more. That's not to say that discussions from either perspective are without issues, and that's something I was keen to explore this issue as we look at the life of Saladin. I'm delighted to have historian and Saladin biographer John Man writing our feature this issue to give us the story of this incredible leader. It was also my pleasure to speak with Dr Suleiman Mourad of Smith College to get a different perspective on Saladin and his legacy. I think it will give you a much better understanding of this complex figure whose story adds so much to the history of the Crusades.

Speaking of experts, it was also a delight to welcome back Willow Winsham, one half of the famous Folklore Thursday team that's taken social media by storm. She introduces us to some tales of watery folklore as a preview to her book with Dee Dee Chainey, *Treasury of Folklore: Seas & Rivers*. Alongside the story of Stalin's deadly scientist, the rise of British fascism and finding out whether the Romans wore underwear, it's a packed issue. So before you get distracted, be sure to download your free ebook and wallpapers (details on the next page) and enter the competition on page 62. I hope you enjoy the issue.

Jonathan Gordon
Editor

ALL ABOUT HISTORY

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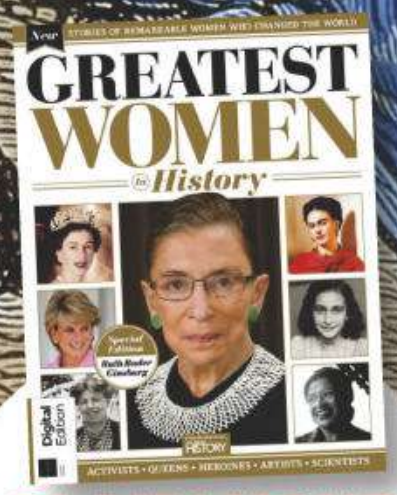
Saladin

How he united the Islamic world to take back the Holy Land from the Crusaders



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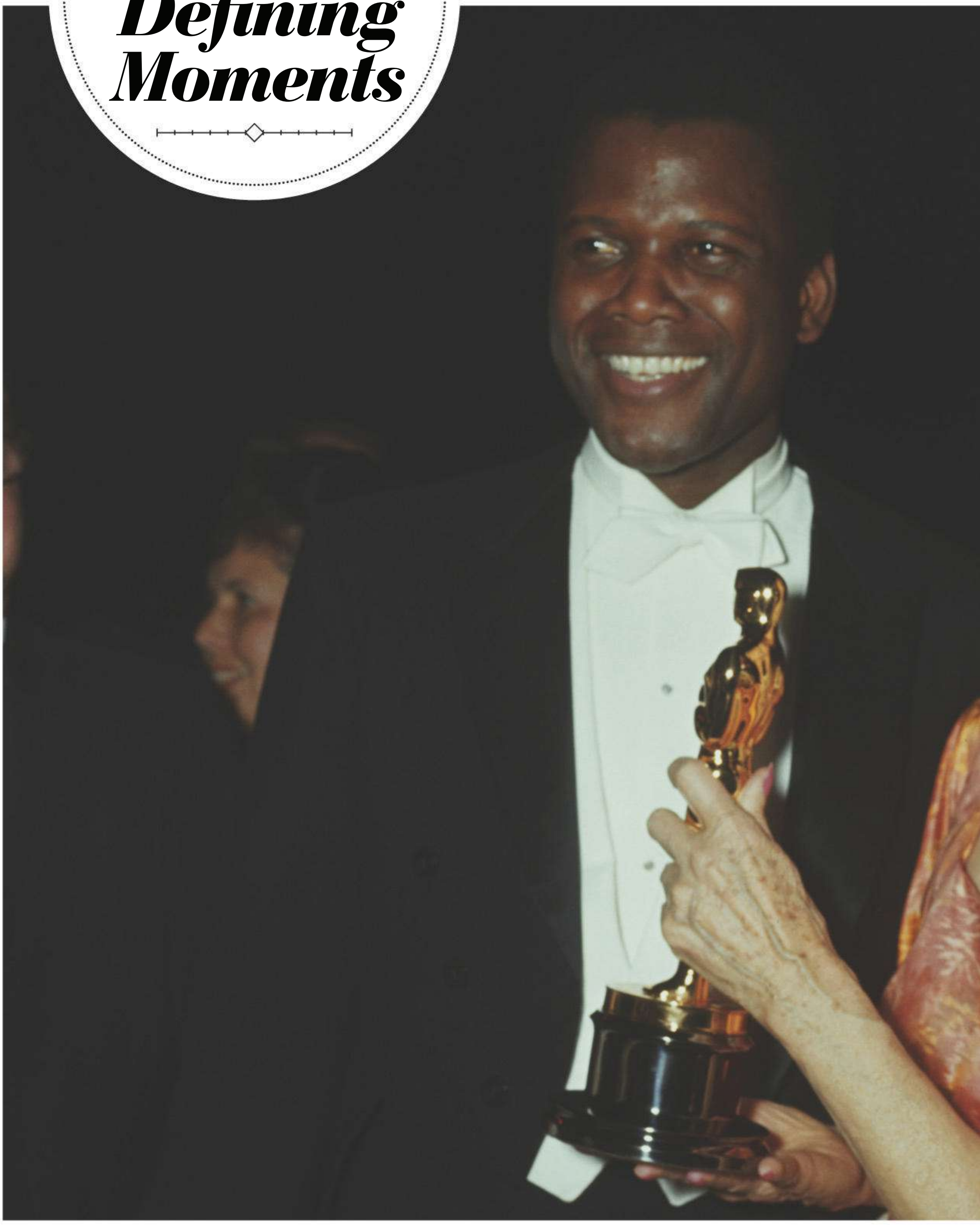
Defining Moments



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13 April 1964

SIDNEY POITIER WINS ACADEMY AWARD FOR BEST ACTOR

At the 36th Academy Awards, Poitier became the first African American male to win the Best Actor award, for his role as construction worker Homer Smith in the 1963 film *Lilies Of The Field*. He had previously been nominated for the same award in 1959, for the film *The Defiant Ones*.

16 April 1912

FIRST WOMAN TO FLY SOLO ACROSS THE ENGLISH CHANNEL

American pilot Harriet Quimby made history when she became the first woman to fly across the English Channel, taking off from Dover and landing around 40km from Calais. The first American woman to become a licensed pilot, Quimby died in a plane accident less than three months after her historic flight.

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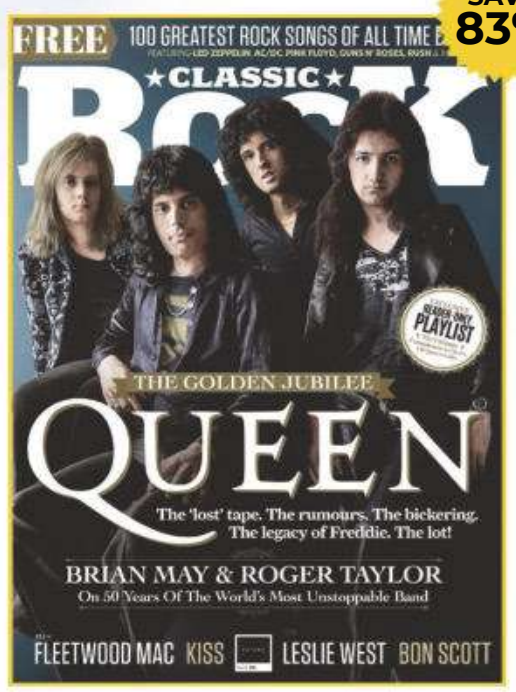
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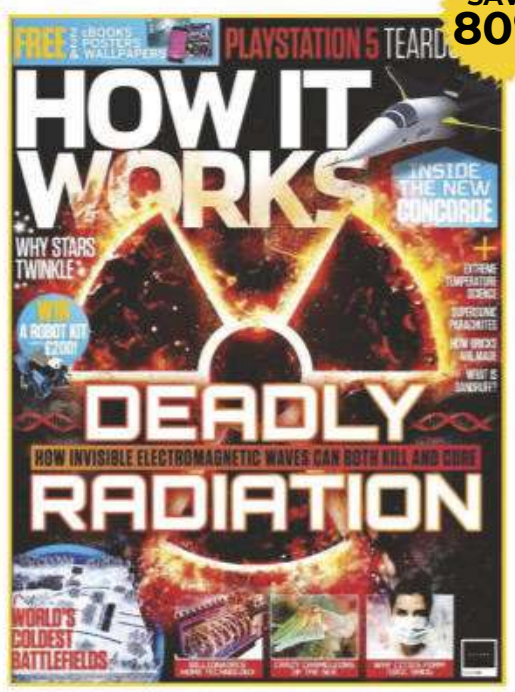

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ALL ABOUT

THAILAND

From its ancient origins to the modern world, delve into this Asian nation's cultural traditions and discover its hidden treasures

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PRINCE PRISDANG

Main image source: © Getty Images

Written by Jessica Leggett, Callum McKelvie, David Crookes

Key Events

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A GREAT CITY EMERGES 1700

Ayutthaya has grown to be a rather significant city, with more than a million inhabitants making it one of – if not *the* – largest in the world. It attracts merchants from across Southeast Asia and its culture and network of canals see it referred to as the Venice of the East.

BRONZE AGE SETTLEMENT 3,000 BCE

Settlers cultivate rice and develop tools in what is now the Nong Han district of Udon Thani province, with the Ban Chiang archaeological site discovered in 1966.

TAI PEOPLE MIGRATE 900

The Khmer Empire extends control from its capital, Angkor, to most of modern-day Thailand and builds temples. Tai people migrate from southern China into northern Thailand.

SUKHOTHAI REIGN ENDS 1438

Long shattered through the breaking away of states and invaded by Ayutthaya armies, Sukhothai ceases to be an independent kingdom following the death of its last king, Maha Thammaracha IV.

3,000 BCE — 700 — 900 — 1438

THE MON KINGDOM 700

The Mon people migrate from China and found the kingdom and culture of Dvaravati, which becomes based around moated cities. Buddhism and Hinduism is strong.

RIVAL AYUTTHAYA KINGDOM EMERGES 1350

As the Sukhothai kingdom expands south, it finds a rival in the southern Thai kingdom of Ayutthaya, founded by Phaya U Thong, its first king.

KING NARESUAN RULES 1590

Great warrior Naresuan frees Ayutthaya from Burmese rule, even slaying the Burmese crown prince in a duel fought on the back of elephants. He seeks friendly relations with the Europeans, including the Dutch.

THE SUKHOTHAI KINGDOM 1238

Tai tribes rebel against the Khmer Empire and a new independent state is established. Sri Indraditya becomes the first king and rules until 1270 but the kingdom prospers under Ram Khamhaeng, who creates early Thai script and presides over a golden age of culture.

Image source: wiki/Supanut Arunoprayote

FIRST BURMESE-SIAMESE WAR 1547

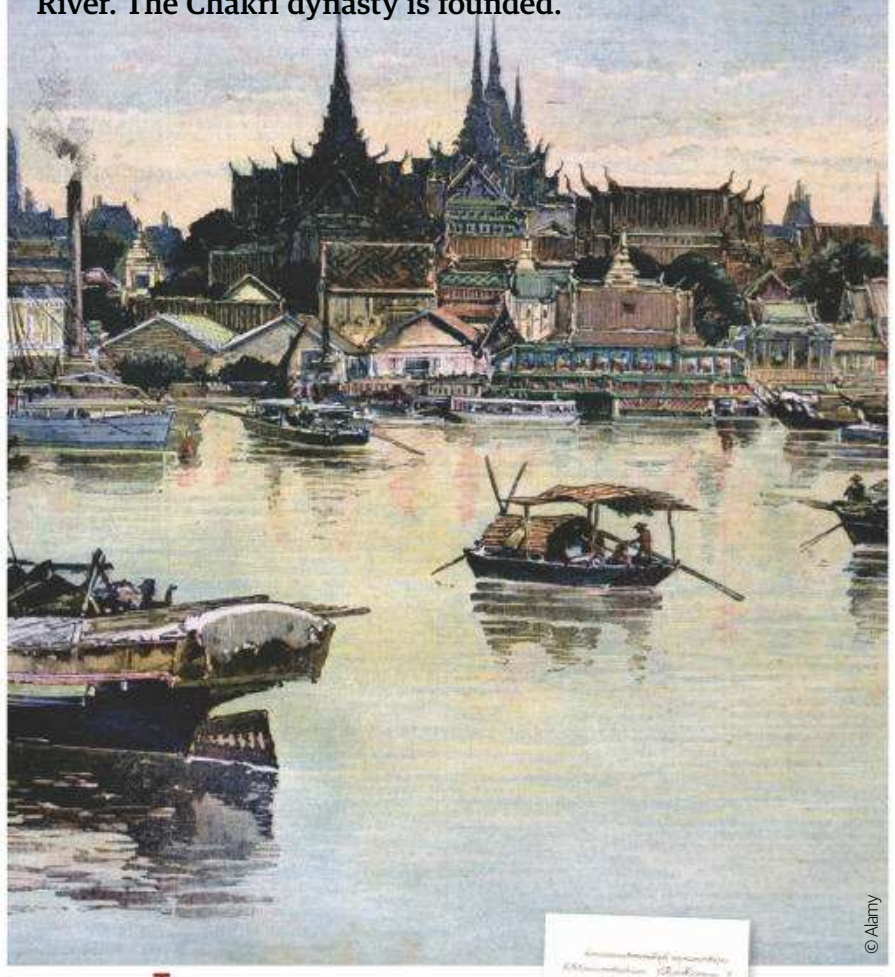
The Mon kingdom of Bago (Burma) invades Thailand (which is known as Siam). Although the city of Ayutthaya is not captured, it becomes the first of 18 wars fought between the countries over the next 300 years.

Siam became a vassal of Burma following the second Burmese-Siamese War in 1563-64

© Alamy

BANGKOK BECOMES THE CAPITAL 1782

After Ayutthaya is sacked by the Burmese in 1767, the kingdom is in tatters and so King Taksin moves the capital to Thonburi. Just 15 years later, however, King Rama I relocates it to Bangkok, directly across the Chao Phraya River. The Chakri dynasty is founded.



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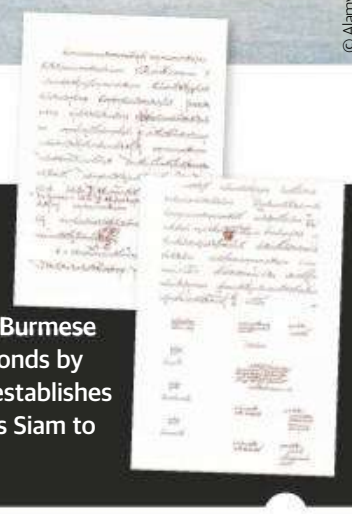
Farmers also rioted in the streets in the 1970s as Thailand fought to transition to a democracy

© Getty Images

MILITARY RULE ENDS... TEMPORARILY 1973

Thai general Sarit Thanarat spearheaded a coup in 1957, prompting 16 years of military rule that comes to an end (for three years anyway) following a popular uprising by students. It's the sixth successful coup since 1932 (amid many more attempts) but not the last: seven more follow, the most recent in 2014.



FIRST ANGLO-BURMESE WAR 1826

Britain gains victory over the Burmese and Siam's King Rama III responds by signing the Burney Treaty. It establishes a close relationship and opens Siam to increased trade.

THAILAND INVADED BY JAPAN 1941

Japanese forces enter Thailand on 8 December but the two sides declare a ceasefire after five hours, forming an alliance that puts Thailand on the side of the Axis powers.

LONG LIVE THE KING 2016

After reigning for 70 years, King Bhumibol Adulyadej dies a the age of 88 having become the world's longest-reigning monarch. Crown Prince Vajiralongkorn becomes king.

Image sources: wiki/Kiwiodysee, wiki/ Suparut Arunoprayote, wiki/ Thames Mapping, wiki/Clumsily, wiki/Peerapat Wimolrungkarat/Government of Thailand

1826 — 1917 — 2004

SIAMESE REVOLUTION 1688

A major uprising leads to the overthrow of pro-French Siamese King Narai. Replaced by Phetracha, troops besiege the French fortress in Bangkok. Ties with the West become limited.

SIAM'S FIRST RAILWAY OPENS 1893

The Paknam Railway opens on 11 April following six years of construction. The 21km line connects Bangkok with Nakhon Ratchasima but closes after 66 years.

TSUNAMI KILLS THOUSANDS 2004

A 9.1-magnitude earthquake rips through an undersea fault in the Indian Ocean, generating a massive tsunami. It kills 228,000 people in 14 countries, leaving 8,000 dead in Thailand.

Image sources: wiki/Gryffindor, wiki/Heinrich Damm, wiki/"Les Missions Etrangeres" Perrin, © Alamy

SIAM JOINS WWI 1917

Having remained neutral for three years, Siam declares war on Germany and Austria-Hungary on 22 July, joining the Allies in World War I. The country's presence on the Western Front leads it to become a founding member of the League of Nations in 1919.

The name Thailand translates to 'land of the free' but it also means 'land of the Thai people'

Image source: wiki/photographe

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SIAM BECOMES THAILAND 1939

The country has been called Siam since the 16th century. However, in the wake of the Khana Ratsadon's 1932 near-bloodless coup d'etat against the Chakri king, which ends 800 years of absolute monarchy and introduces democracy, it changes its name to Thailand.

Inside History

WAT PHRA KAEW

Bangkok, Thailand
1783-84

Wat Phra Kaew, also known as the Temple of the Emerald Buddha, was constructed by King Rama I, the founder of the Chakri dynasty. It's located within the complex of the Grand Palace, the official residence of the kings of Thailand (previously Siam) since 1782, which was built when King Rama named Bangkok as Siam's new capital.

Since the Sukhothai period around eight centuries ago, it has been a tradition to construct a Buddhist temple within the grounds of a royal palace. The temple was modelled after Wat Phra Si Sanphet, the former temple at the old Royal Palace in Ayutthaya, which was destroyed in 1767. It is the most important Buddhist temple in Thailand – a country that has over 40,000 of them – although it is the only one not to have any living quarters for monks.

The site is renowned for being the home of the Emerald Buddha, the most sacred Buddha image in Thailand, which was likely created in the 15th century. In the 16th century, the Emerald Buddha was taken to the city of Vientiane (in modern-day Laos) by the king of Lan Xang, Setthathirat I. In 1779, it was eventually brought back to Siam by King Rama, while he was still a general, and enshrined at the temple in 1784.

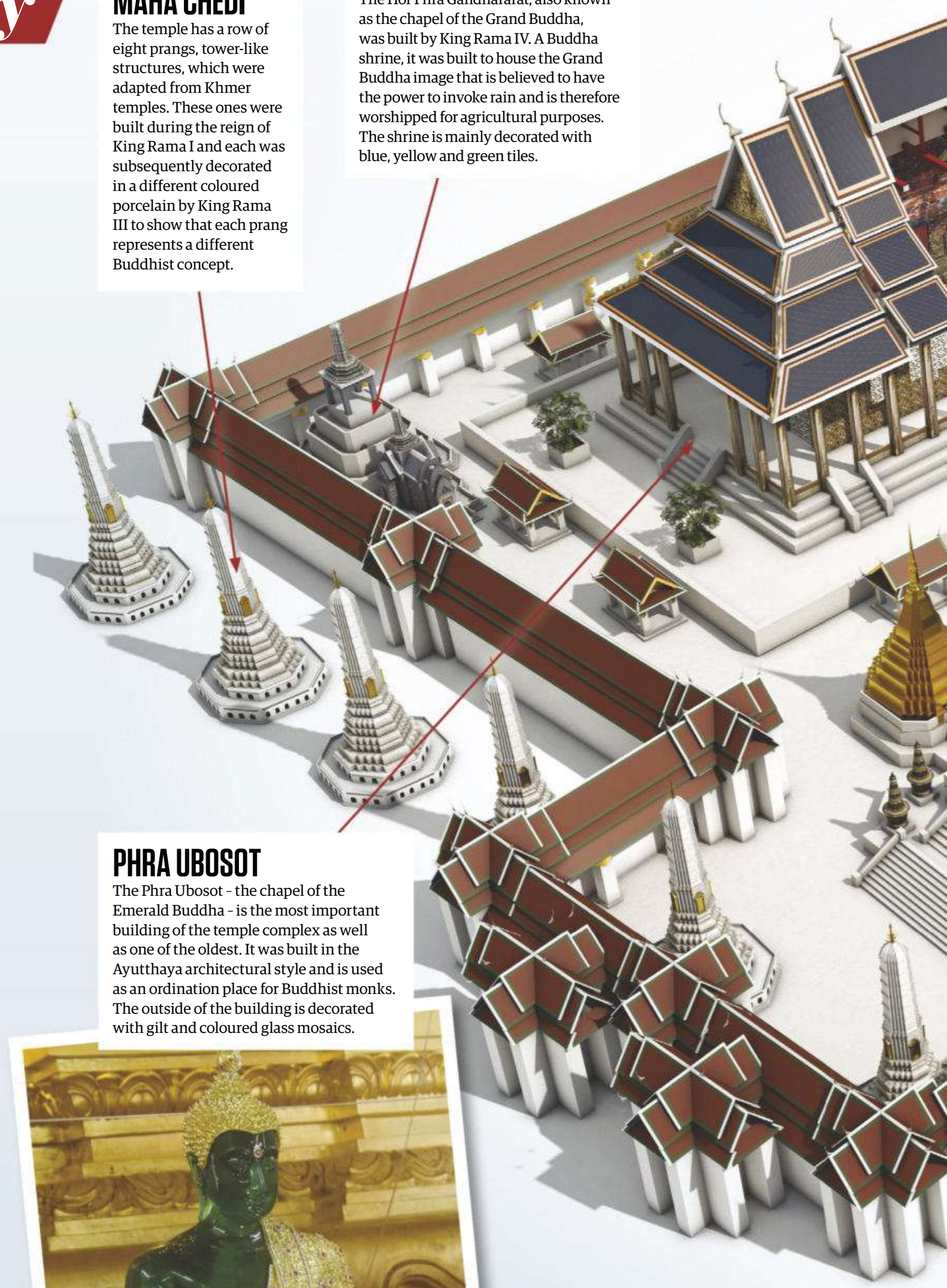
Numerous royal and state ceremonies are held at the temple every year, with the site serving as a symbol that connects Thailand's monarchy to Thai Buddhism. There are many sacred buildings within the temple complex, showcasing different architectural styles, that have been restored and renovated several times over the last two centuries by different monarchs. The temple is also famous for its centuries-old mural painting of the *Ramakien*, one of Thailand's national epics, which features on the cloister wall around the complex.

PHRA ASADHA MAHA CHEDI

The temple has a row of eight prangs, tower-like structures, which were adapted from Khmer temples. These ones were built during the reign of King Rama I and each was subsequently decorated in a different coloured porcelain by King Rama III to show that each prang represents a different Buddhist concept.

HOR PHRA GANDHARARAT

The Hor Phra Gandhararat, also known as the chapel of the Grand Buddha, was built by King Rama IV. A Buddha shrine, it was built to house the Grand Buddha image that is believed to have the power to invoke rain and is therefore worshipped for agricultural purposes. The shrine is mainly decorated with blue, yellow and green tiles.



PHRA UBOSOT

The Phra Ubosot – the chapel of the Emerald Buddha – is the most important building of the temple complex as well as one of the oldest. It was built in the Ayutthaya architectural style and is used as an ordination place for Buddhist monks. The outside of the building is decorated with gilt and coloured glass mosaics.

© Alamy

THE EMERALD BUDDHA

One of Thailand's most sacred objects and believed to bring prosperity to the nation, it's thought that the Emerald Buddha is made out a semi-precious green stone, such as jade or jasper. The Emerald Buddha wears clothing made of pure gold and his outfit is changed three times a year, in accordance with the seasons. This is done by the king, the only person allowed to touch the Emerald Buddha.

PHRA MONDOP

This Buddhist library was built during the reign of King Rama I in 1789 to house sacred texts. It notably features a large book cabinet, decorated with mother-of-pearl inlay, which contains the complete *Tripitaka*, the name for the Buddhist scriptures. The exterior is lavishly decorated with different coloured glass.

PHRA SI RATTANA CHEDI

Established by King Rama IV in 1855 to house the relics of the Buddha, this golden chedi – also called a stupa – is bell-shaped and in the Ceylonese architectural style. It was originally covered in whitewash before the golden tile mosaics, imported from Italy, were applied during the reign of King Rama V.

HO PHRA NAK

The original Ho Phra Nak was built by King Rama I to enshrine the sacred Phra Nak Buddha image from Ayutthaya. However, King Rama III decided that the complex needed a royal mausoleum and so he had the original building torn down and replaced with the one that still stands today. The mausoleum contains the ashes of several members of the royal family, kept in gold urns.

PHRA WIHAN YOT

This building was constructed during the reign of King Rama III and it's used as a chapel to house several important Buddha images. The structure's spire was designed to resemble the royal crown, and the exterior is decorated with coloured porcelain mosaics from China. It was restored by King Rama V.

PRASAT PHRA THEP BIDON

The Prasat Phra Thep Bidon was originally built to enshrine the Emerald Buddha in 1856 by King Rama IV, but the building was too small to hold any ceremonies. Instead, King Rama V enshrined a golden stupa inside, but the building was damaged by a fire in 1903. King Rama VI had the building restored, transforming it into the Royal Pantheon, which currently houses eight full-sized statues of the Chakri kings.

HO PHRA MONTHIANTHAM

This auxiliary library was actually built by Maha Sura Singhanat, the younger brother of King Rama I. Previously used as a classroom and exam room for monks, today it is used for Buddhist sermons on Buddhist holy days. Inside, there are two mother-of-pearl inlay bookcases which contain various Buddhist scriptures.

Illustration by: Adrian Mann

Anatomy

KHON DANCER

Thailand

c.16th century – present

THAI TRADITION

Khon is a classical performing art that tells the story of *Ramakien*, the Thai version of the Hindu epic *Ramayana*. Originally produced for royal entertainment, the khon also has a social, cultural and political purpose, portraying loyal subjects whose king, Rama, always wins over evil.

KING OF THE DEMONS

This is the costume for Thotsakan, also known as Ravana, the main villain of *Ramakien* who has ten faces and 20 arms. Thotsakan abducts Sita, the wife of Phra Ram, the protagonist and an incarnation of Vishnu. Thotsakan is eventually killed by Phra Ram in a great battle.

CHARACTER MASK

Many of the male dancers wear helmet-like masks that cover the entire face, made out of papier-mâché, paint, lacquer, gold leaf and glass mosaic. The character is identified by the colours and facial expressions used on the mask, with demons' masks featuring bulging eyes and teeth.

DEMON COSTUME

The dancers all wear heavily embroidered clothing that has remained the same for centuries. In fact, the male dancers actually have to be sewn into their clothes, a process that takes around an hour. The costumes for the demon characters, like Thotsakan, usually feature darker colours that emphasise their strength and aggression.

THOTSAKAN'S WEAPONS

Thotsakan uses a variety of different weapons during the performance, including a crossbow, dagger, mace, lance, hammer, arrow, halberd and staff. Interestingly, the acrobatic dances of the khon have been influenced by krabi krabong, the art of traditional Thai sword and baton fighting.

SACRED ACT

Khon dancers begin their training at the age of 13 and train for several years to perfect their movements, skills and knowledge of their characters. As the *Ramakien* is a story related to the gods, the performance must be respectful and conducted in accordance with customs, traditions and rites.

ELABORATE JEWELLERY

Khon dancers wear custom-made jewellery that is largely handcrafted using casting and repoussé metalwork techniques. This includes bracelets, rings, necklaces, pendants, anklets, armlets, headdresses and even jewelled belts, buckles and collars. Male and female royal characters typically wear the most ornate jewellery, distinguishing them from others in the khon.

Illustration by: Kevin McGivern

Historical Treasures

THE RAM KHAMHAENG INSCRIPTION

One of Thailand's most important historical documents Sukhothai, c.1292

The Ram Khamhaeng Inscription is the earliest known example of Thai script and the forerunner of the modern Thai alphabet. Inscribed on a black stone stele, it describes the 13th-century kingdom of Sukhothai during the reign of King Ram Khamhaeng.

It was discovered in 1833 by Prince Mongkut, later King Rama IV, who claimed that he found the inscription among the ruins of the old palace at Sukhothai. It was placed in the Wat Phra Kaew – the Temple of the Emerald Buddha – after Mongkut acceded to the throne. The inscription remained at the temple until 1923 and it was moved several times until it was placed in the National Museum in Bangkok, where it remains today.

The inscription was created to mark the occasion of setting up a stone throne for the king and four inscriptions were made in total, although this is the only one to have survived. Attributed to King Ram Khamhaeng himself, the inscription records Sukhothai as a plentiful, pious and peaceful state while glorifying the king's life and excellent governance.

However, the change in tone across the inscription suggests that it was written over some time, with the absence of the first pronoun in the last two parts indicating that they were written after the king's death in 1298. Most of the inscription was deciphered a few decades after its discovery, but some letters have disappeared or remain unknown.

Even so, there has been debate surrounding the authenticity of the inscription and whether it is a 19th-century forgery, possibly arranged by Prince Mongkut himself to justify his reformist policies. The stone was subsequently analysed in 1990 using a scanning electron microscope and energy dispersive X-ray spectroscopy, which confirmed that it was at least 500 to 700 years old.

The inscription contributed to the Historic Town of Sukhothai being designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1991, where there is a replica of the stele on display at the Sukhothai National Museum. It was also added to UNESCO's Memory of the World Register in 2003, emphasising the global significance of the inscription and the invention of a new writing system.

NATIONAL HISTORY

This account about the kingdom of Sukhothai has played a crucial role in the national history of Thailand. In particular, the belief that Thailand rose from the prosperous kingdom, governed by a gracious king, forms an integral part of the country's national identity.

A NEW SCRIPT

The script used was adapted from pre-existing Khmer and Mon scripts. Although the inscription credits King Ram Khamhaeng with inventing the script, it has also been suggested that it was created by scholars at his request.

MEASUREMENT DETAILS

The stone stele is 114.5cm high with four sides, each one 35.5cm wide, and topped by a quadrilateral pyramid. There is writing on all four sides, with 35 lines on the first and second and 27 on the third and fourth.

WORLD SIGNIFICANCE

The Ram Khamhaeng inscription contains several political, economic and cultural values that are shared by many modern states today. This includes good governance, political legitimacy, economic freedom, religious morality, freedom of expression and citizen's rights.

Image source: wiki/ludexvivorum

Hall of Fame

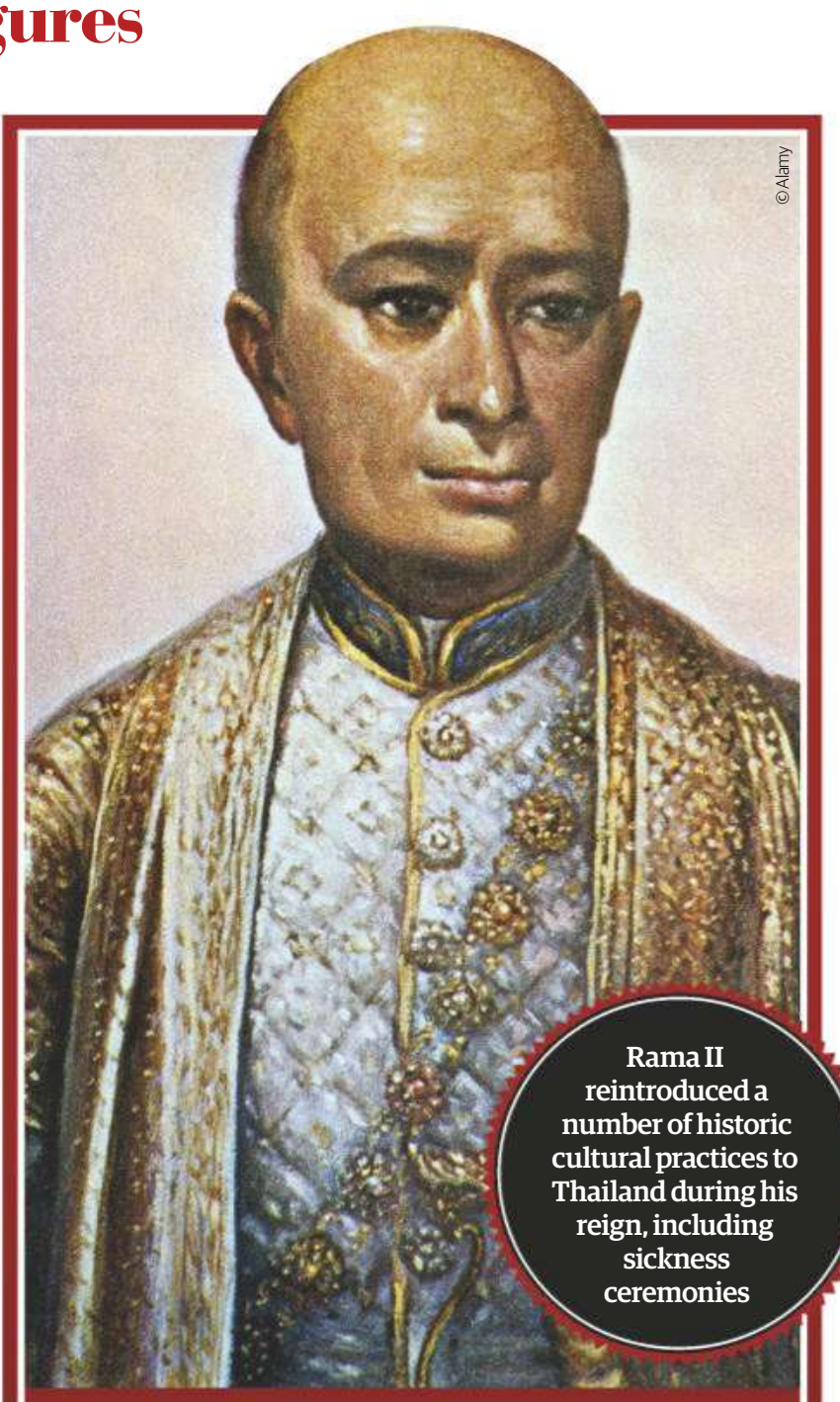
THAI CULTURAL ICONS

The rich artistic history of Thailand explored through some of its most influential figures

KING NARAI
1632-88

Known as King Narai 'The Great', alongside his diplomatic achievements he is best remembered for producing the first 'Golden Age' of Thai literature. His reign (1656-88) saw the creation of new verse forms and he had many well-known poets among his court, including the legendary Sai Prat. Narai himself was a poet and writer whose most famous works include poems based on tales from the *Fifty Jakatas* and a version of the poem *Pra Lo*, begun previously by an anonymous author.

Image source: wiki/"Les Missions Etrangeres" Perrin



©Alamy

Rama II reintroduced a number of historic cultural practices to Thailand during his reign, including sickness ceremonies

King Rama II
1767-1824

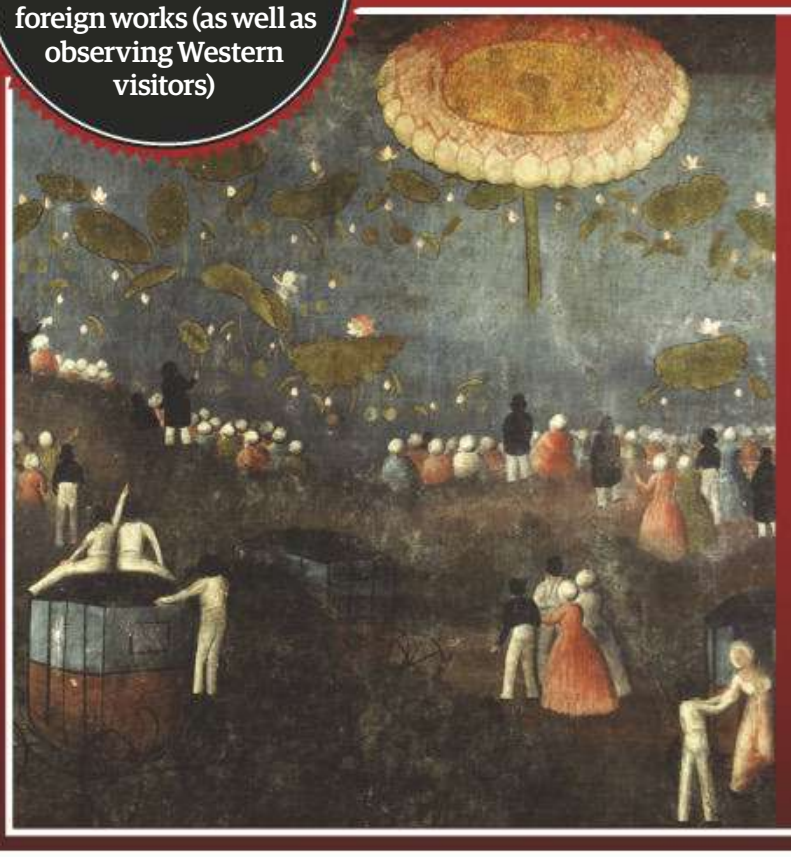
He was affectionately known as one of the great 'Poet Kings'. Under his reign (1809-24), which can be characterised as one of peace and prosperity, Thai culture reached new creative heights of sophistication. However, Rama II was also himself a great poet and dramatist and is responsible for creating many epic poems and stories. Among his most well known and remembered works are *Inao* (based on a well-loved folk story) and the dance drama *Sang Thong*. He also acted as a patron to a number of highly respected poets, perhaps most notably Sunthorn Phu. Following his death, Thai literature is said to have declined greatly.

©Getty Images

CHATRICHALERM YUKOL 1942 – PRESENT

Prince Chatrichalerm Yukol began his filmmaking career in 1971 with the first Thai science fiction film *Out Of The Darkness*, but soon made a name for himself with genre cinema tackling political and social issues, such as 1973's *Dr Karn*. In the early 2000s he directed a number of incredibly popular epic films, including *The Legend of Suriyothai* and *Naresuan*. Throughout his career, Chatrichalerm fought hard against censorship and, despite his often low budgets, created a number of inventive and highly ingenious films.

Khrua In Khong never visited Europe and drew his influence from reviewing reprints of foreign works (as well as observing Western visitors)



© Alamy

Khrua In Khong
Unknown – c.1860

A famous monk and painter during the reign of King Rama IV (1851-68), Khong is remembered for his adoption of Western styles into traditional Thai art. During his lifetime he was well respected, despite being a subordinate painter in the employ of the king. It was Rama IV who encouraged Khong to adopt the Western style and to incorporate it into the murals he was commissioned to create. In order to complete these works, Khong would lock himself in his monk's residence, barring all visitors in case they should break his concentration. Shown here is a painting depicting Bhuddha blossoming like a lotus.

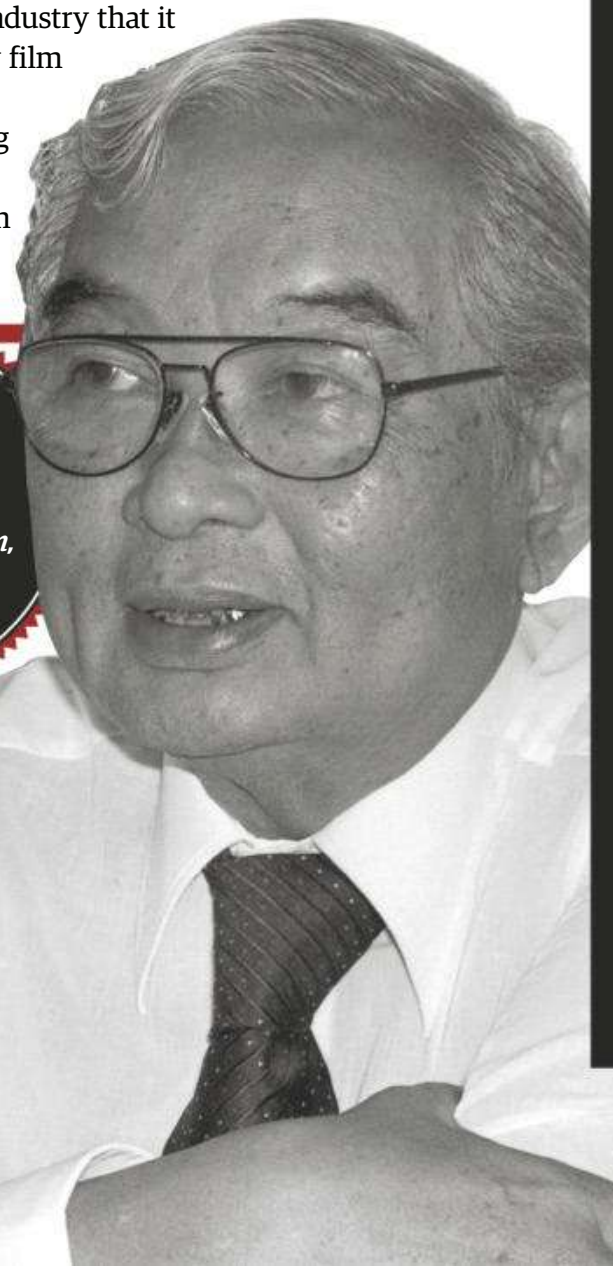
NAOWARAT YUKTANAN
1958 – PRESENT

One of the most famous actresses in Thailand, Yuktanan's cinematic career began in the 1970s and she's now one of the most popular soap stars and radio performers. In 1976, at the age of 18 she was presented with a Golden Doll award for her performance in *Phaedin Khong Raw*. As well as her distinguished career as an actress, Yuktanan also spends time using her make-up skills to help prepare bodies for funeral rites, stating that she wishes to make people happy and show respect to the older generation.

MITR CHAIBANCHA
1934-70

Image source: wiki/Curtis Winston

In less than 15 years, actor Mitr Chaibancha starred in over 265 films during the 1950s and 1960s, from family dramas to westerns. The productions of this time were incredibly low budget, often shot on 16mm film. Tragically, in 1970 Chaibancha died at the age of 36 when he fell while filming a helicopter stunt for *Insee Thong* (*The Golden Eagle*). So impactful was his death on the 16mm film industry that it caused many film producers to begin making more higher-quality 35mm movies.



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Kukrit Pramoj
1911-95

Kukrit Pramoj wrote a number of novels and a play based on Akira Kurosawa's *Rashomon*, as well as several non-fiction works

A descendent of Rama II, Kukrit Pramoj served as prime minister of Thailand from 1975-76 and had a distinguished career as a diplomat afterwards. Yet prior to his political career he was known for his novel *Si Phaendin* (*Four Reigns*), arguably one of the most popular Thai novels of all time. As the book's title suggests, it tells the experiences of a family under the rule of four monarchs, from 1910 to 1946. He also had a movie role acting alongside Marlon Brando in the 1963's *The Ugly American*.

KANHA KHIANGSIRI
1912-99

Having her first novel published when she was just 18 in 1929, Kanha Kiangsiri (born Ko Surangkanang) produced her masterpiece, *The Prostitute*, eight years later. This book highlighted some of the social and economic inequalities occurring in Thailand at the time, while also proving to be immensely influential. It showed a character becoming a sex worker not because they were inherently 'bad' but because they were forced to through hardship and strife.

SAO SAO SAO
ACTIVE 1981-1990

During the 1980s, pop trio Sao Sao Sao (Girl, Girl, Girl) was the most famous group in Thailand. Their album *Pra Too Jai*, released in 1983, sold 300,000 copies and the band soon became known for the girls' colourful image. In 1990 the band decided to part ways due to their interest in undertaking higher education, but in 2019 the girls reunited for a sell-out concert.

Image source: wiki/koratnfe.go.th

SILPA BHIRASRI (CORRODO FEROCI)
1892-1962

An Italian-born sculptor, he became a professor of art at the age of 23 and was hired by King Rama VI to work as a sculptor of monuments. Bhirasri was also a great advocate for Thai art and worked to spread the knowledge of this overseas. In 1933 he opened the Silpakorn School, the first Thai art school, which became a university in 1943. He also launched the first National Exhibition of art in 1949.

Q&A with...

PROFESSOR TAMARA LOOS

Exploring Siamese politics through the extraordinary life of Prince Prisdang Chumsai

Who was Prince Prisdang Chumsai and why did you decide to write a biography about his life?

Prince Prisdang, who lived from 1852-1935, was the first Siamese (Thai) royal family member to obtain a university degree abroad (King's College, London, in 1876), and went on to become Siam's first diplomat to most countries in Europe in the 1880s. He served as Siam's ambassador to the world's dominant global powers during the most dramatic moment of Siam's history, when its independence was threatened by European imperialism. In the 1880s France threatened Siam's independence from the east, where it finalised its conquest of Indochina, and Britain encroached on Siam from Burma in the west. As Siam's ambassador to these imperial countries in Europe, Prince Prisdang was best placed to advise his king about how to proceed in precarious negotiations with France and Britain, which were eyeing Siam as their next potential colony.

In 1885, King Rama V sought Prisdang's advice on how to prevent a European colonisation of Siam. What did the prince suggest?

To ensure Siam wouldn't suffer the same fate as its colonised neighbours, Prisdang responded to the king's request by taking the lead in drafting a blueprint for the massive reform of its governing institutions, including the recommendation for a constitutional monarchy. The document's brilliance lay in its realpolitik awareness of how ideas such as progress and civilisation operated as a justification for colonisation in Asia. To the petition drafters, the European impulse to 'civilise', whether sincere or a ploy, represented the biggest threat to Siam's sovereignty. Instead, they argued Siam would have to transform and modernise its political, economic and legal structure. Through such efforts, Prisdang showed that he was more than a cultural interlocutor and diplomat: he was also midwife to Siam's emergence as a modern state. The king eventually adopted some of these recommendations, but not the one suggesting a constitutional monarchy.

"The European impulse to 'civilise' represented the biggest threat to Siam's sovereignty"

Why was Prisdang forced to flee into exile in 1890?

Most scholars point to the 1885 proposal as the cause for Prisdang's demise – they argue it incurred the king's wrath for suggesting a form of rule other than absolutism. However, Prisdang fled into exile in 1890, five years after submitting the petition to his beloved monarch. Prisdang himself was at a loss to explain conclusively what caused the rift between him and the king that catapulted him out of his homeland for 20 years, from 1890 until 1911. No official explanation was given for the departure of Siam's most well-known government official. Even in his autobiography, published in 1930, Prisdang did not write about the momentous event that threw into question his loyalty and caused him to flee into exile in 1890. Instead, he removed several tantalising pages of the narrative leading up to his exile, as if Prisdang had changed his mind and ripped them out just before the autobiography went to press. Yet in the autobiography's foreword he remarks on the missing pages, purposefully revealing their absence. Into the silence, attempts at an explanation rushed in. He fled to escape a rap sheet of rumours and ruinous gossip. In a social system that shunned conflict and profoundly valued group harmony, this attack on Prisdang's reputation amounted to a colossal and irreparable loss of face. Face or reputation is determined by and through social relationality, one that demands the de-emphasis of the individual and continual re-inscription of hierarchical positions between people. It is this social hierarchy that undergirded Siam's royal political complex that Prisdang's case so clearly exposes. And the cost of his disruptive actions impelled him to consider suicide and, when that failed, to flee in ignominy.

What can Prisdang's story tell us about Siamese politics in the late-19th century?

His story sheds light on the weakness of political institutions, including the monarchy, in the late-19th century – a time when imperial powers were expanding their territorial reach in Southeast Asia. This in turn led Siam's king to centralise power exclusively in his own hands, using the European colonial state as his model. It also reveals the significance of extralegal social mechanisms to punish anyone who suggested a political system that curtailed the king's power. Prince Prisdang lived

Tamara Loos is professor of history and Southeast Asian Studies at Cornell University. She is the author of *Subject Siam: Family, Law And Colonial Modernity In Thailand* (Cornell University Press, 2006) and has written articles about sex and politics, transnational sexualities, comparative law, the family, suffrage, rape and notions of liberty in Thailand.

Headshot source: R. David Vernon

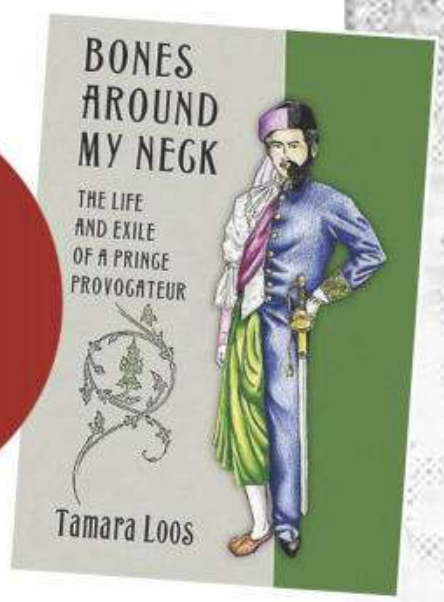
in exile for two decades, during which he was enrobed as a monk in Sri Lanka, led educational reforms for the poor in that country, lionised Siam's king as the pope of the world's Buddhists, and mediated the gift of the Buddha's bone relics to King Chulalongkorn, among many other adventures. He continually sought forgiveness from the king in an attempt to return home, but was granted this wish only after King Chulalongkorn died. Once home, Prisdang was socially ostracised and barred from meaningful employment. He lived a life of penury until he died in 1935.

How does Prisdang's eventful life shed light on the censorship regarding the monarchy in modern-day Thailand?

Prisdang's story draws critical attention to acts of self-censorship, which are motivated both by laws against criticising the monarchy and by social expulsion. His example forces us to consider the invisible acts of self-censorship that many Thai nationals exercise today to avoid prosecution for breaking lèse majesté laws and to avoid upsetting the status quo. His experience reveals that power and control over Thai subjects can be exerted through forms of social disciplining, not just through law or other overt forms of punishment meted out by the state. The tools of social control used against Prisdang included gossip, rumours and 'influence' – extra-institutional methods that disciplined lapses in emotional and behavioural expression. These forms of emotional control reinforced Siam's existing social and political hierarchy by casting out those who breached its limits. Today Thai protesters deploy both forms of protest – the silent three-finger salute from *The Hunger Games*, as well increasingly vocal forms by demonstrators who bravely critique the current King Vajiralongkorn.

RIGHT Prince Prisdang was a member of the Siamese royal family and a diplomat

Image source: wiki/Camsj58



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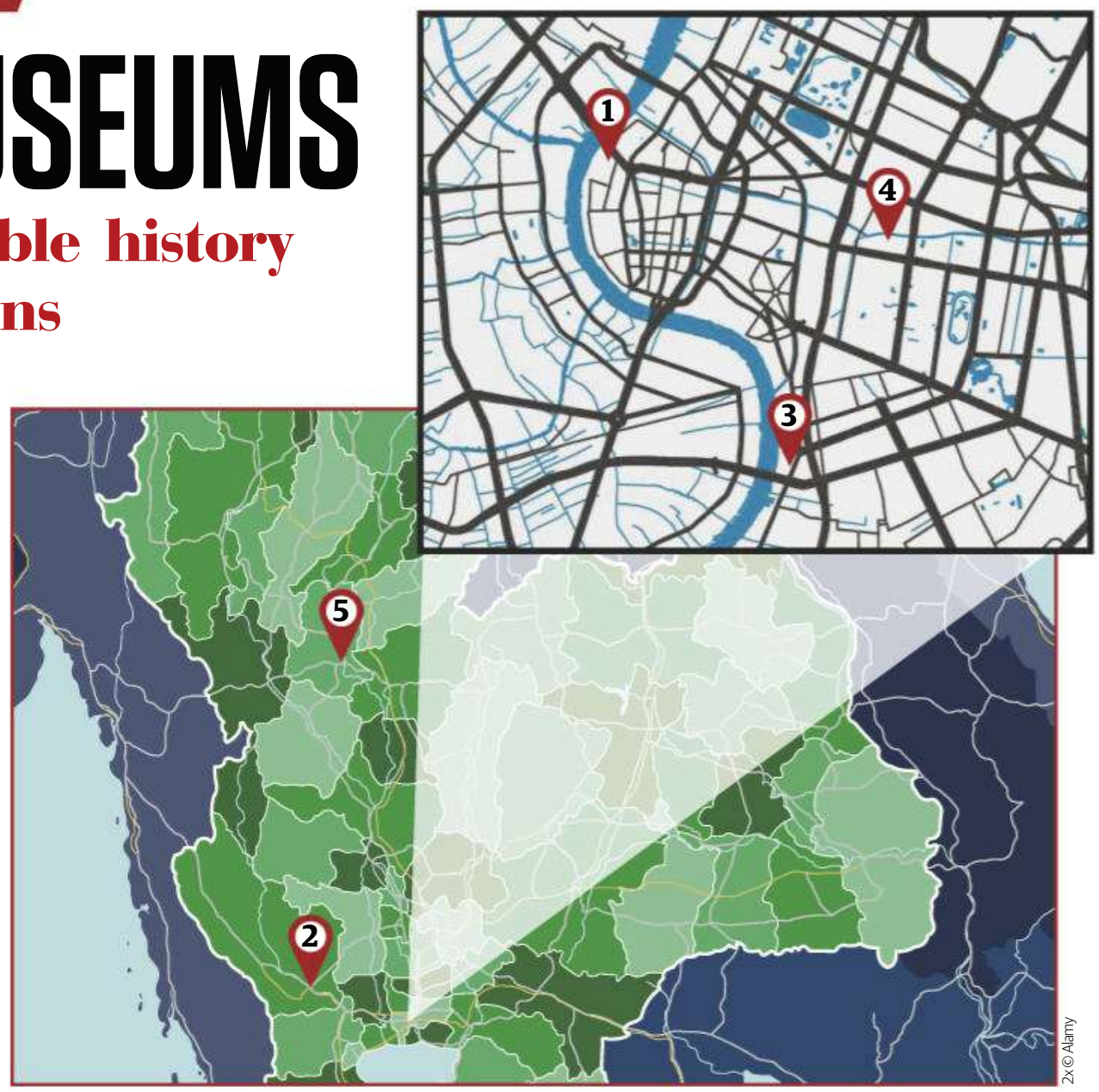

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1 NATIONAL MUSEUM
BANGKOK

Aside from modernising what was then known as Siam, King Rama V was keen to showcase the historical artefacts that had been collected by his father, King Mongkut. To do so he turned the residence of the vice king – the Front Palace, completed in 1785 – into a museum, packing three halls to the brim with antiquities. Since it opened in 1874, it has expanded greatly, with exhibits now spread over 12 themed rooms. Four more are set to open.

The items have also been recently reorganised to ensure they are better presented. As such, you're able to get a wonderful flavour of Thailand's past. There's art, murals and bronzes amid the artefacts collected during the Dvaravati, Srivijaya, Sukhothai and Ayutthaya periods. There's a wonderful hall dedicated to ceremonial royal carriages, too. The structure of the building, which has a road leading to the nearby Grand Palace, has also been well maintained, making it a sight worth seeing in itself.

Open Wednesday to Sunday, 9.30am-4pm, with admission costing 200 Baht (£4.70). tourismthailand.org/Attraction/national-museum

The museum has three permanent exhibition galleries and three main spaces

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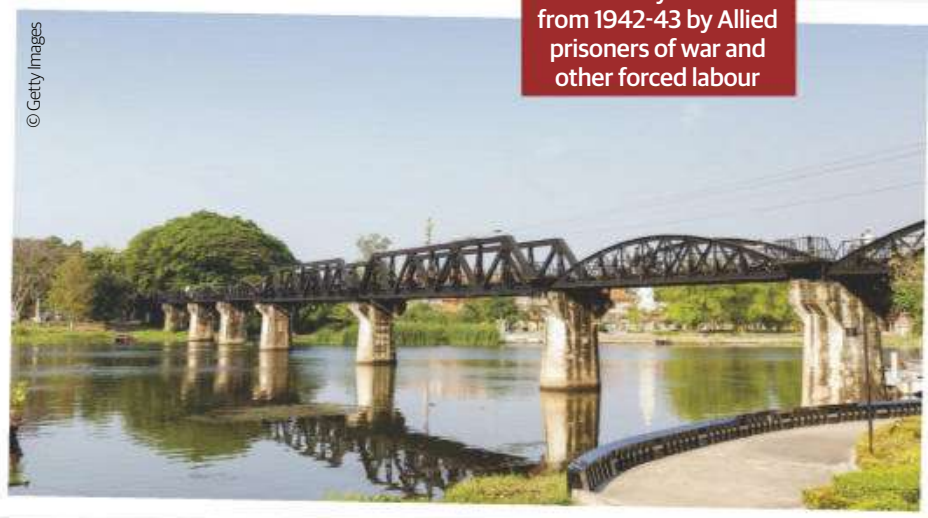
2 BRIDGE OVER THE RIVER KWAI
KANCHANABURI

Work to build a railway bridge in Thailand during World War II became the subject of a well-known novel and film, *The Bridge On The River Kwai*. Visit the actual bridge in real life (rather than the filmed one in Sri Lanka), however, and reality hits home: constructed by Allied prisoners during the Japanese occupation of Thailand for the Burma-Siam railway, bridge number 277 resulted in the deaths of 13,000 soldiers – two-thirds of whom are buried in nearby cemeteries.



© Getty Images

The railway was built from 1942-43 by Allied prisoners of war and other forced labour

The railway line is still in use, allowing trains over what is today called the Khwae Yai River. The bridge, which was bombed by the Allied forces and rebuilt, also remains an impressive structure that affords great views, but the full human cost and horror of Japan's Death Railway has to be remembered. Learn more about the history and background by visiting the JEATH War Museum, founded in 1977, or the more modern Thailand-Burma Railway Centre, which is close to the war cemetery. Be warned that the images there can be graphic.

The Thailand-Burma Railway Centre is open daily, 9am-4pm, with admission costing 150 Baht (£3.50) and 70 Baht (£1.60) for children aged seven to 12. tbrconline.com

The detail of the architecture around the Grand Palace makes for a rewarding visit

3 THE GRAND PALACE
BANGKOK

Situated in the bustling heart of Bangkok is an imposing complex of halls, temples and spires that make up the glittering Grand Palace. It's located beside the Buddhist temple Wat Pho, which has more than 1,000 images of Buddha. One, a humongous reclining Buddha, is 46 metres long and covered in gold leaf. It's a sight to behold!

The Grand Palace is obviously splendid, too. This impressive maze of more than 100 buildings was the official residence of the kings of Siam and, while no royalty has resided there since 1925, it's still used for various regal ceremonies. The current King Vajiralongkorn was crowned there following three days of pomp and splendour in 2019, and as a backdrop it takes some beating.

Suitably lavish, with carefully crafted architecture, the buildings date back to 1782 when King Rama I was in power, and much of it is available for tourists to see. Explore the inner, middle and outer court and visit the Temple of the Emerald Buddha (which we look at in greater depth on page 14).

Be sure to check out the throne room, too, where King Rama I received his subjects, and view the meticulously restored murals. Just be aware that parts of the palace still have working areas. Men must also wear long-sleeve shirts and trousers with socks and shoes, while women must cover their shoulders.

Open daily, 8.30am-3.30pm, with admission 500 Baht (£11.70). royalgrandpalace.th/en/home

4 JIM THOMPSON HOUSE MUSEUM
BANGKOK

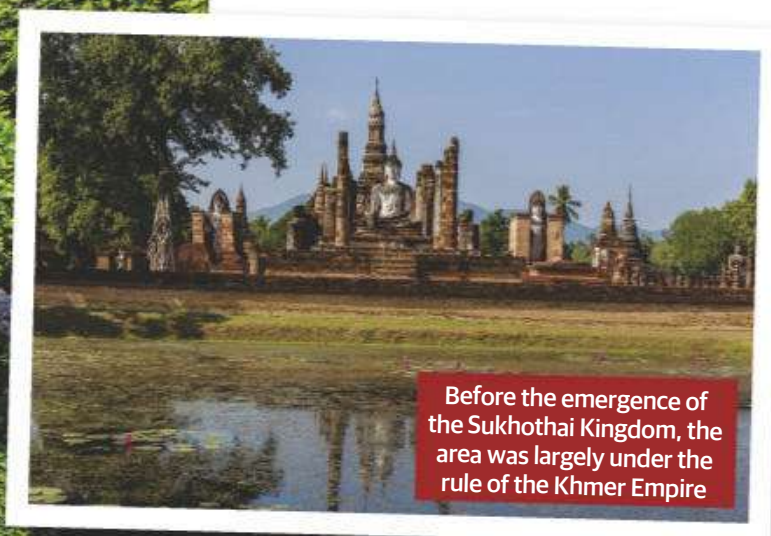
Nobody knows for sure how the New York businessman Jim Thompson died. He went for a walk in the Malaysian highlands half-a-century ago and was never seen again. What is known, however, is what Thompson did in the 61 years after his birth in 1906. He was an architect, an army officer, and even a spy for a short spell. More notably, Thompson revitalised the Thai silk industry during the 1950s and 1960s – a feat which earned him the nickname The Thai Silk King.

His beautiful wooden home is open for visitors. It was turned into an art museum in 1959 while he was still alive and it houses a rare collection of Asian art silk as well as historic Buddhist statues and traditional Thai paintings – items he collected during his travels around Thailand, Cambodia, Burma and Laos. There are actually six buildings full of history here as well as an art centre in the same compound. A guided tour is a must.

The home is made up of parts of derelict Thai houses brought to its current canal-side location in 1959

© Alamy

Open every day 11am-7pm, with admission costing 200 Baht (£4.70), 100 Baht (£2.30) for visitors under 22, and free for children under 10. jimthompsonhouse.com



Before the emergence of the Sukhothai Kingdom, the area was largely under the rule of the Khmer Empire

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5 SUKHOTHAI OLD CITY
SUKHOTHAI

Sukhothai was the first capital of Siam, the focus of the Sukhothai Kingdom which existed between 1238 and 1583. It's 426km north of the present capital Bangkok and it is of such importance that it became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1991, praised for its fine monuments and distinctive architectural style.

There are over 190 ruins here and to explore them is to truly step back in time. In fact, it can be argued that there's more reason to visit Sukhothai than Ayutthaya, which was the most important city of Thailand's rival kingdom, not least because Sukhothai predates it by some 113 years. It's certainly quieter, making for a more contemplative experience.

Highlights include Wat Mahathat, founded by Sri Indraditya between 1292 and 1347. There's also the ruined Buddhist temple complex, Wat Phra Pai Luang, which is thought to have been founded by the Khmer Mahayana Order around the 12th and 13th centuries. The Ramkhamhaeng National Museum is here too, housing more than 2,000 artefacts. Perhaps most awe-inspiring, however, is Wat Si Chum, which has a huge Buddha image that is not only 11 metres wide and 15 metres tall but has very long gold-tapered fingers that are as tall as an adult and point down towards the ground. Ongoing excavation work has unearthed many historic gems and you won't walk away disappointed.

Open 6am-6pm daily, with admission to the five zones of the Historical Park costing 100 Baht (£2.30) each. thailandforvisitors.com/north/sukhothai/historical-park/index.php

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THE FIRST SULTAN

SALADIN

How did he unify the Islamic world to reclaim the Holy Land from the Crusaders?

Written by John Man

Ask anyone in the eastern Mediterranean to name their greatest hero and the answer will almost certainly be Saladin. All across Europe and America, if you ask for one Arabic hero, the answer will probably be the same. His achievements alone explain why. Salāh al-Dīn Yūsuf ibn Ayyūb – known as Saladin – united most of the divided Muslim world against the Crusaders, who had seized what they called the Holy Land and its religious heart, Jerusalem. In 1187, after 20 years of campaigning, he recaptured Jerusalem and set about driving the Crusaders into the sea. But he was more than a brilliant general. It was his personality that made him a hero for both sides.

Although a leader of the Arabs, he was technically Kurdish, born in Tikrit, Iraq, some time in 1137-8. His father, Ayyub, took him to Baalbek in today's Lebanon to escape a family feud. This was the first of many strokes of good luck that shaped his life. Baalbek – ancient, with crisp air smelling of orchards and gardens – was at the centre of the Muslim world, which reached from Spain to India and inspired glorious buildings, rich literature and first-rate science. Baalbek was also on the frontier between two rival empires, the Abbasids ruling in Baghdad and the Fatimids in Cairo. The two had inherited the great split in the Muslim world between Sunnis – those guided by the sunnah, the sayings of the Prophet Mohammed which they traced back to the Prophet's uncle Abbas – and the Shia (Shiat Ali, the Party of Ali), who looked back to the Prophet's son-in-law Ali and his wife, the Prophet's daughter, Fatima. Abbasids and Fatimids, Sunni and Shia: their rivalry defined Islam, with the regions of the rival sects further divided by sub-sects and ambitious rulers. To unify such a mix was a challenge for any leader wishing to face the greatest challenge of all – the Crusaders.

They were there because in 1095 the pope, Urban II, urged them to go. He did so because the so-called Holy Land was mostly in Muslim hands and was also threatened by 'barbarians' from Central Asia, the Turks, on their slow migration into the country now named after them. Along the way, they had taken Jerusalem, the heart of Christianity. In addition, Christendom – most of the former Roman Empire – was divided against itself. The western ▶

EXPERT BIO

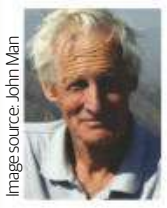

Image source: John Man

JOHN MAN

Historian and travel writer

With a speciality in Chinese and Mongolian history, Man has written numerous books on Eastern history including biographies of Genghis Khan, Attila, Marco Polo and Kublai Khan to name just a few. He was awarded Mongolia's Friendship Medal in 2007 for his contributions to UK-Mongolian relations.

"HE WAS MORE THAN A BRILLIANT GENERAL. IT WAS HIS PERSONALITY THAT MADE HIM A HERO FOR BOTH SIDES"

Saladin: The Life, the Legend and the Islamic Empire *by John Man is available now from Transworld Publishers*

Illustration by Joe Cummings

part (Europe, headed by the pope) was rivalled by the eastern part (ruled by a patriarch from Constantinople, formerly Byzantium and now Istanbul). Urban wished to reunite Christendom with a supposedly noble cause – to regain the Holy Land. Addressing a vast crowd in Clermont, south-west France, he urged war against the 'infidels'. The crowd roared approval, and the word spread. In the first of many crusades, hundreds of knights led a rabble eager for loot, certain that they were doing God's work. In 1099, the Franks – as Muslims called these French invaders – took Jerusalem with extreme brutality. The coast, from the border of Turkey to the edge of Sinai, became four Christian states, defended by 36 formidable castles. Muslims were outraged. Leaders demanded jihad, holy war. But Muslim leaders, it seemed, were better at fighting each other than fighting the Crusaders. Over the next 40 years, both sides learned to live together. On the Muslim side, anger gave way to resignation.

Yet there was a possible leader. His name was Nūr al-Dīn, ruler of northern Syria. Through his father, he had long-standing connections with Saladin's father, who became Nūr al-Dīn's top aide. From boyhood, Saladin knew Nūr al-Dīn well. He was a man of fine qualities – austere, generous, pious, charitable, charming and handsome, "with beautiful, melting eyes" in the words of the chronicler Ali ibn al-Athir. His senior general was Saladin's uncle, Shirkukh, burly, quick-tempered and beloved by his men. All three – Saladin's father, Nūr al-Dīn, Shirkukh – made fine role models for the young Saladin.

Saladin's first break came in the south, in Egypt. Egyptians were Shi'ite, their rulers Fatimids, and their realm was in decline, beset by violence. Of 15 viziers, who held the real power under the caliph, an impotent figurehead, 14 had been murdered. In 1163, the current one, Shawar, escaped an assassination attempt, fled to Syria and begged Nūr al-Dīn for help. Nūr al-Dīn agreed in exchange for one-third of Egypt's grain revenues. The two set out with 10,000 cavalry, bringing Saladin, now 24, with them on a long hard march across the gravel plains of Sinai to Cairo. There Shawar, reinstated, turned on Nūr al-Dīn and sought help from, of all people, Amalric, the Christian king of Jerusalem. The ensuing battles were inconclusive but Saladin proved himself a competent leader, before returning to Syria.

"'THY SERVANT HAS SWORN TO SHED THE BLOOD OF THE TYRANT OF KERAK.' JIHAD WAS NOW PERSONAL"

ABOVE The Ayyubid cavalry was one of the most effective tools in Saladin's army

LEFT Saladin was born in Tikrit, Iraq, and was of Kurdish lineage

Under Amalric and Shawar, Egypt descended into more violence and chaos. In late 1168, Nūr al-Dīn took advantage by sending Shirkukh to seize control, with Saladin as his aide. They were welcomed as liberators. Shawar was captured, and executed, while Shirkukh was made vizier by the 19-year-old caliph, al-Adid. At his side was his executive officer, Saladin.

One evening three months later, Shirkukh ate an over-hearty meal, suffered a seizure and died. The obvious successor was Saladin. In a lavish ceremony, Caliph al-Adid confirmed him in office, spelling out in flowery words Saladin's duty to wage holy war: "As for the jihad, thou art the nursling of its milk... Gird up therefore the shanks of spears to meet it." Saladin, his modesty unaffected by power and splendour, committed himself not just to jihad but also to good government and service to the Sunni caliph in Baghdad.

These were hard tasks. He was serving two versions of Islam with two caliphs, in

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Cairo and in Baghdad, and he still owed allegiance to Nūr al-Dīn in Damascus. He also faced opposition from locals who resented the influx of Syrians, from a 50,000-strong army of black Nubians in the south, and from a sea-borne invasion sent by Christian Byzantium. In response, he built a ruthless secret service, put his father in charge of Alexandria and his elder brother in charge of the south, built up the navy and replaced Shi'ite officials with Sunnis. On the first day of the Muslim new year (10 September 1171), in the Friday prayers, he had the name of the local caliph replaced by that of the Baghdad caliph – the start of Saladin's Ayubbid Dynasty (1171-1260). Good luck helped. The young caliph, still only 20, died, possibly of poison. Saladin proved a master of PR, accompanying the caliph's body at his funeral and providing for his family. Saladin, in his early 30s, was Egypt's supreme ruler.

Under his firm leadership and a display of Islamic virtues, Egypt thrived. Saladin taxed the rich, enforced the giving of alms to the poor (a prime Muslim virtue) and encouraged trade by all nationalities – Italians, Christians, Jews – tolerance being another Islamic virtue. Indeed, his own doctor was a Jew, Maimonides, the greatest intellectual of the age.

Again, luck favoured him. In May 1174 Nūr al-Dīn collapsed during a game of ▶

KEY BATTLES

The conflicts that shaped Saladin's rise

BATTLE OF MARJ AYYUN
(10 June 1179)

During a period of drought, Saladin offered a truce and end to raids in return for the Crusaders abandoning nearby strongholds. The offer was refused and raids continued, including crop burning. The Crusaders sent out a force to the Litani River and attacked Saladin's advance guard thinking it was his main force. Saladin arrived quickly with the rest of his army to devastate the Christian forces.

BATTLE OF THE HORNS OF HAMA
(13 April 1175)

An opening battle in Saladin's campaign to control Syria, he was up against the combined armies of Aleppo and Mosul. While having a smaller force, he held the strong defensive position atop the hills of Hama and held on for as long as possible. His reinforcements from Egypt turned the tide as they trapped the enemy and defeated them.

BATTLE OF HATTIN
(3–4 July 1187)

20,000 Crusaders went to the aid of Tiberias only to be worn out by hot and dry conditions. Saladin met this depleted force with his 30,000 men at Hattin and decimated them. While he allowed the lords to leave, including new king of Jerusalem Guy de Lusignan, captured templars and hospitallers were killed, and he personally executed Reynald de Châtillon.

SIEGE OF JACOB'S FORD
(23–30 August 1179)

With a fortress at Jacob's Ford just a day's march from Damascus and a possible staging ground for Crusader incursions into Egypt, Saladin set about destroying it in a siege. With Baldwin IV's forces close, the siege needed to be swift and ruthless. Siege mines around the walls were used to collapse them and the Crusader forces inside were mercilessly slaughtered.

BATTLE OF AL-FULE
(30 September – 6 October 1183)

With raids continuing and having achieved greater control of Syria, the Crusaders looked to confront Saladin to bring his incursions to an end. Guy de Lusignan looked to engage in close-quarters fighting to stifle Saladin's army, which ended in a stalemate between the two armies.

SIEGE OF KERAK
(November – 4 December 1183)

As the castle from which Reynald de Chatillon struck out at Muslim caravans on their way to Mecca, Kerak was a regular target for attack by Saladin. On this occasion Baldwin IV personally led his army to relieve the siege, even though he was now confined to a stretcher. Seeing he was pincered between this new force and the walls of Kerak, Saladin ended the siege.

BATTLE OF MONTGISARD
(25 November 1177)

Looking to take advantage of uncertainty in Jerusalem, Saladin marched 27,000 men from Egypt. However, his army became dispersed thanks to raids on their journey. The Crusaders, led by Baldwin IV and Reynald de Chatillon intercepted Saladin at Montgisard, catching him off guard and his army out of formation. Tired from their march and looting, Saladin's forces were routed.

THE EMPIRE BUILDER

Who was Nūr al-Dīn, the man who set the stage for Saladin?

While it might go too far to describe Nūr al-Dīn as a mentor for Saladin, his influence on the future sultan is clear. At a time when a divided Muslim world was unable to coordinate a resistance to the European invaders in Syria and Palestine, Nūr al-Dīn showed the way.

Nūr al-Dīn Abū al-Qāsim Mahmūd ibn Imād al-Dīn Zangī, to give him his full name, was born in Damascus around February 1118, less than 20 years after the First Crusade had ended and Jerusalem had been captured. He succeeded his father, Zengi, as ruler of Halab in 1146, not long after he had recaptured the county of Edessa from the Crusaders. This victory would kickstart the Second Crusade in response just as Nūr al-Dīn took control and offered a banner for Muslims to rally around.

He took back Damascus in 1154 and gradually took over Egypt between 1169 and 1171. But rather than build his personal wealth or prestige he appears to have spent any treasures accumulated on building mosques, schools, roadside inns called caravansaries and hospitals. Much of the Muslim world Saladin would consolidate in the years to come was shaped by the rule of Nūr al-Dīn.

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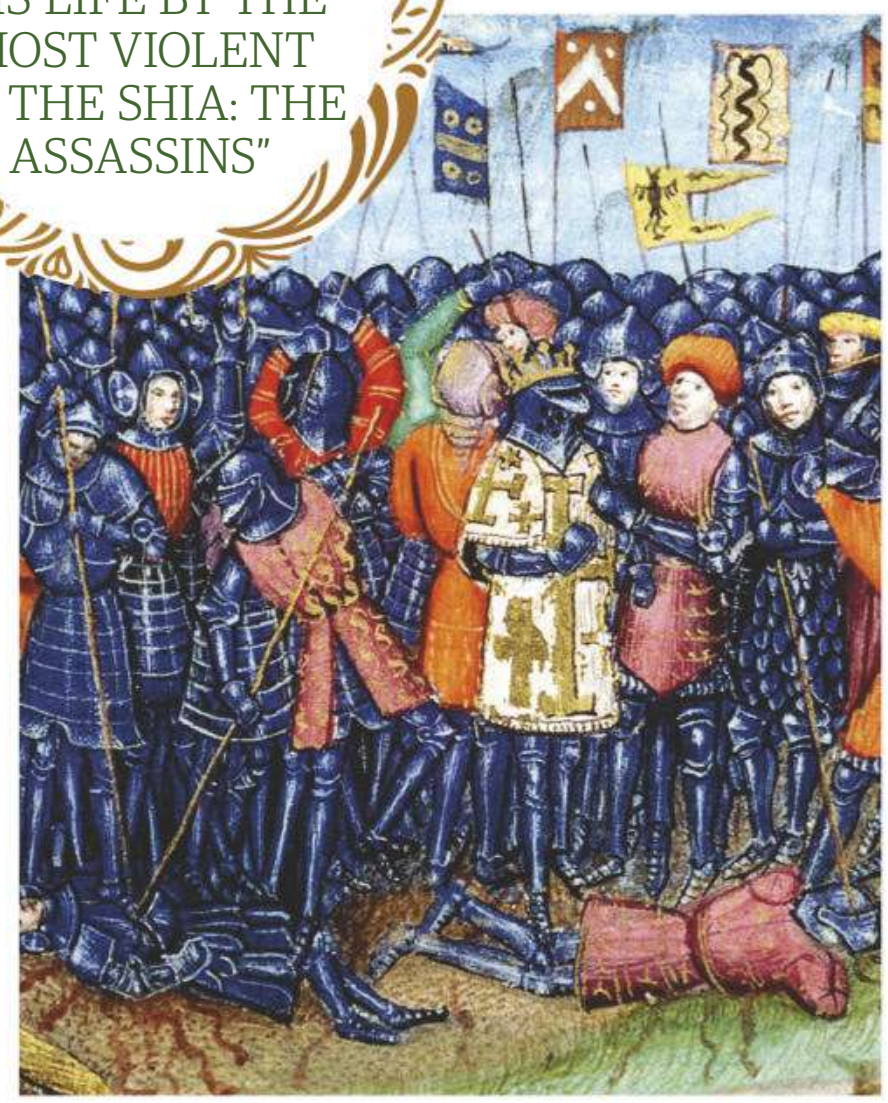
polo. He died a few days later, universally admired for his many virtues. Saladin saw he could fill the void by pursuing a grand vision: to unite Egypt and Syria, and on this foundation retake Jerusalem and drive out the Crusaders. To do this, he had to get back to Syria.

By chance, the governor of Damascus asked him to take over the city. Leaving Egypt with huge sums of cash, he entered Damascus in November 1174. The money helped, but once again he increased his popularity by downplaying his personal ambition, insisting that he was preparing for jihad.

Damascus, however, was not all Syria. Mosul, Edessa, Aleppo, Hama, Baalbek and Homs were all semi-independent, with their own prickly leaders. It took two years to beat or cajole them into allegiance. Twice he survived attempts on his life by the most violent of the Shia subsects, the Assassins. Again, he proved adept at leadership. Future unity meant that current enemies would one day be allies, so he was magnanimous, banning indiscriminate slaughter and releasing captives. By 1176, when he returned to Cairo, he was master of Syria, Egypt, and much of north Africa and the west of Arabia. He became known as Sultan Salāh al-Dīn (Righteousness of the Faith) – Saladin to Europeans. Only Aleppo and Mosul remained independent. Jerusalem was almost within his grasp.

It was not to be, not yet, partly because of one man. If Saladin is our story's hero, there is also a villain. His name was Reynald de Châtillon, reviled by Muslims (and many Christians) as a brutal, deceitful, vengeful thug. Perhaps he also had rakish charm, because having arrived with the Second Crusade in 1147, he married Constance, the 26-year-old princess of Antioch, the Holy Land's second-holiest city. After several years of raiding, he spent 16 years in a Muslim prison, until he was ransomed. By then, Constance had died. With a new wife, he acquired her castle, Kerak, an immense pile on a crag on the road between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba. Here he acted as a warlord, harrying Muslim traders and pilgrims. In 1177, he was part of a Christian force that caught Saladin's army unaware at Montgisard, an unidentified place in what is now southern Israel. In this unique catastrophe, Saladin lost 2,000 men and almost his life.

> "SALADIN SURVIVED TWO ATTEMPTS ON HIS LIFE BY THE MOST VIOLENT OF THE SHIA: THE ASSASSINS"



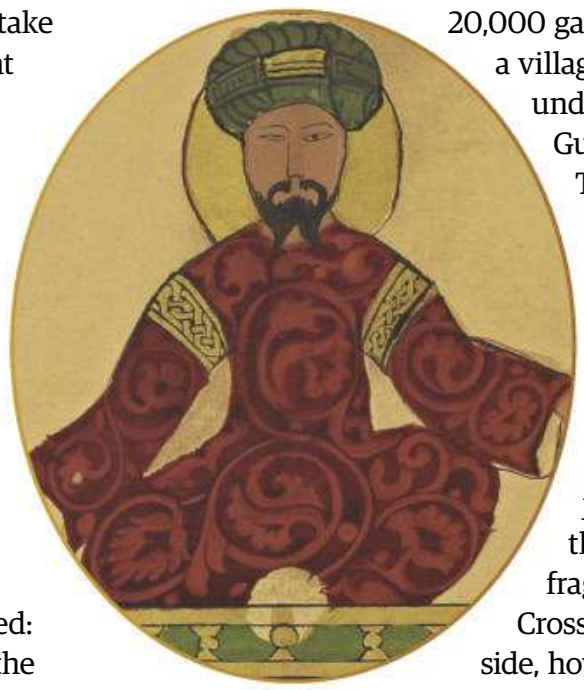
ABOVE The Battle of Hattin was a key turning point for Saladin's efforts to reclaim the Holy Land

This was a low-point for Saladin. His authority remained tenuous in a region seething with unstable elements. It suited both sides to agree a truce. It would take several years for the tide to turn in Saladin's favour as the contestants jockeyed for advantage.

One of them was Reynald, who had the astonishing idea of striking at the heart of Islam. The best approach was by boat, down the Red Sea, an Islamic preserve, never before penetrated by Crusaders. Reynald didn't participate directly, but in 1183 150 of his men in three ships raided and pillaged on both sides of the Red Sea, until either killed or captured. Muslims said Reynald's men were on their way to Mecca (the Prophet's birthplace) or to Medina to dig up Mohammed's grave – a ludicrous claim, given the distance and the impossibility of staying hidden. But the idea was enough to super-charge Saladin's determination to retake Jerusalem.

He had to wait. Jerusalem was in the hands of a 23-year-old, Baldwin, a surprisingly effective leader despite being incapacitated by leprosy. The stalemate

lasted two more years until, in 1185, Baldwin died and the Christians squabbled over an heir. In a dramatic conspiracy, the Leper King's sister Sybilla, having been proclaimed queen, crowned her own husband Guy de Lusignan as king. Still Saladin could not take advantage, because that winter he developed a high fever, recovering only in early 1186.



It was Reynald who inspired Saladin to act. Nominally, Christians and Muslims were bound by a truce, always ignored by Reynald. Now he went beyond the pale. Saladin's secretary al-Adin recorded what happened: "The most perfidious, the most evil of Franks" seized a caravan of 400 camels carrying Muslim pilgrims to Mecca. Saladin was furious. As he wrote to the caliph, "Thy servant has sworn to shed the blood of the tyrant of Kerak." Jihad was now personal.

Messages went out across Saladin's empire, summoning leaders to a war of vengeance, liberation and annihilation. Around 30,000 came, and camped 10km west of the freshwater Lake Tiberias (the Sea of Galilee). A Christian army of 20,000 gathered near Sephoris, a village near Nazareth, under Jerusalem's king, Guy de Lusignan. Though fewer, they were supremely confident that their heavy cavalry would prevail. Besides, they had with them their greatest talisman, a piece of jewelled wood that they believed was a fragment of the True Cross. With God on their side, how could they fail?

Guy de Lusignan made a move early on Friday, 3 July. Under a merciless sun, everything depended on access to water. Where Saladin had teams of camels bringing skins of water from Lake Tiberias, Lusignan planned on using several wells ▶

ABOVE-LEFT An image of Saladin from the 12th century, as close to contemporary as we know of, but still considered an idealised image

Image source: wiki/Freer Gallery of Art

ABOVE Guy de Lusignan was a French royal and knight who became king of Jerusalem after the death of Baldwin IV thanks to his marriage to Baldwin's sister, Sibylla

Image source: wiki/Palace of Versailles

LEFT A 13th century depiction of Saladin facing off against Guy de Lusignan

Image source: wiki/metmuseum

along the way. To their left rose two low hills, the Horns of Hattin, and to the north, 18km from the Christian army, was the village of Hattin, which had a well. At midday, already desperate for water, that was where they headed, with Muslim horse-back archers probing their flanks.

Night fell, and the Christians were still 4km short of Hattin. The two armies camped so close that the demoralised Christians could hear Saladin's men celebrating the coming victory with drums, prayers and singing.

Saturday, 4 July, dawn: the Christians had only one thought now – water. They set off along the valley floor, while Saladin's men harried them, setting fires to add smoke to the insufferable heat. Ahead, Muslim cavalry blocked the way. A small gap led uphill towards a few shallow pools at an abandoned hamlet. The Christians retreated up the slope, a mêlée around the True Cross, only to find the pools dry. Fighting off a hopeless counter-attack, the Muslims moved in, killing at will and seized the True Cross. Survivors, exhausted and despairing, collapsed on the ground, awaiting death or capture.

Saladin prostrated himself in a prayer of thanks then, in his tent, sent for surviving Christian leaders. What followed was recorded in several sources. King Lusignan and Reynald were brought in and offered chairs. By tradition, prisoners offered refreshment were to be spared, but none was offered yet. Saladin looked at Reynald, whom he had sworn to kill. "How many times have you sworn an oath and then violated it?" he said through an interpreter. Reynald answered arrogantly: "Kings have always acted thus. I did nothing more."

It sounded like a claim to be Saladin's equal. Yet Saladin calmly ordered some iced water for Lusignan, a gesture of reassurance. He drank and handed the cup to Reynald, a move that should have been Saladin's. He said to Lusignan ominously: "It is you who have given him to drink." The two were led out. Saladin took a break to review his troops. He returned, sent again for Reynald, told him of the oath to kill him and offered him a chance to convert. When he refused, Saladin "advanced towards him, sword in hand and struck him between the neck and shoulders". Aides completed the beheading, and the head was later sent on a tour of Saladin's main cities.

How many died that day? No one counted. Estimates say 30,000-40,000. Whatever the figure, little remained for the defence of Jerusalem.

"MUSLIM JIHAD AND CHRISTIAN FERVOUR COULD HAVE LED TO BLOODSHED, BUT SALADIN, PREVENTED IT"

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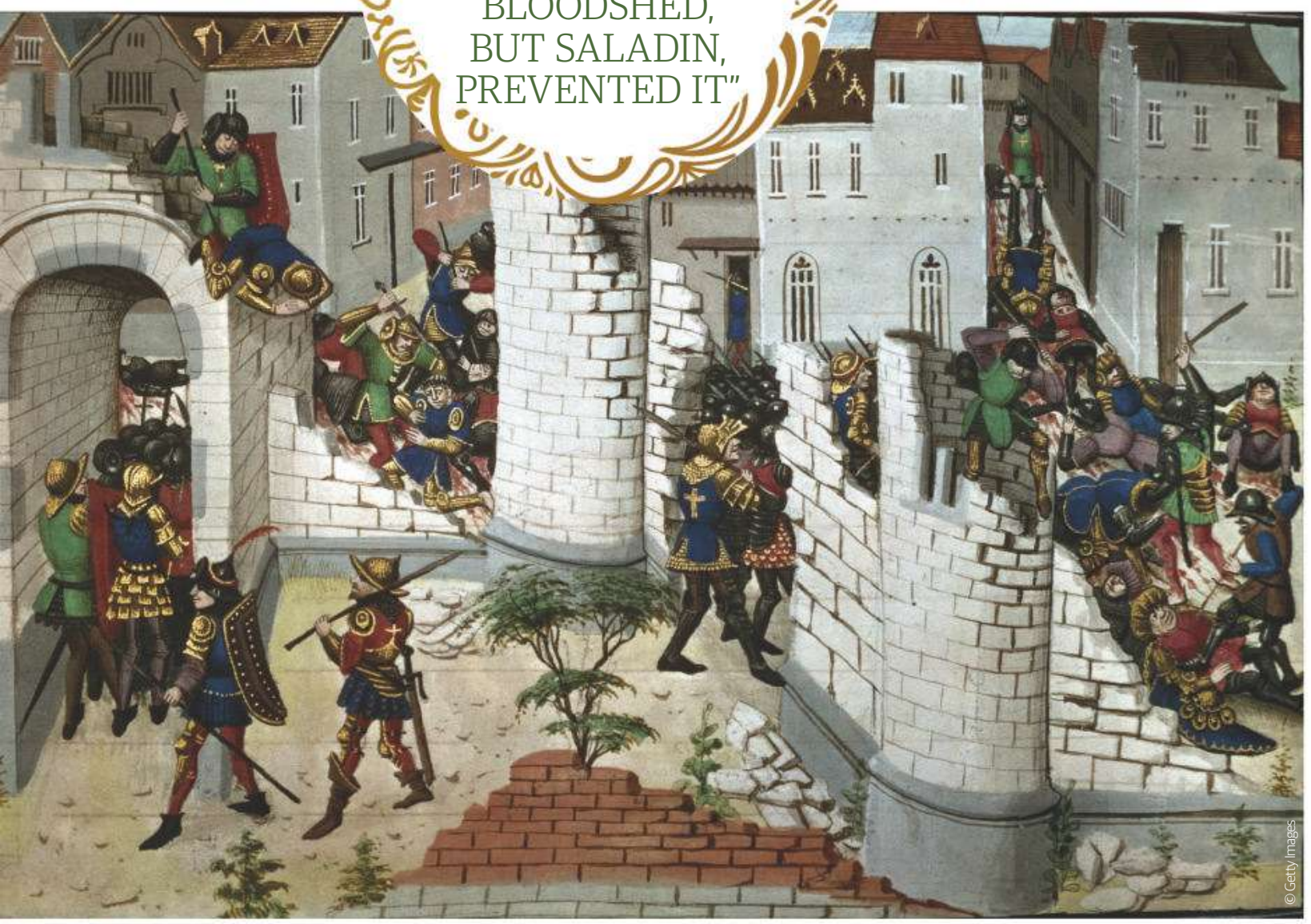
ABOVE Saladin supervises his men as they lay siege to Jerusalem

BELOW The Siege of Jerusalem was ultimately settled through negotiations after several days of intense battle



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First, Saladin sealed the coast to forestall possible reinforcements by Christians. That took two months. In September, he offered Jerusalem's leaders generous terms if they surrendered. They refused. Both sides prepared for attack. Jerusalem was commanded by Balian of Ibelin, the head of an eminent Crusader family, who had been allowed briefly into the city to save his wife – a remarkable example of Saladin's chivalry. Having discovered Jerusalem to be leaderless, he had stayed, sending Saladin an apology for breaking their agreement.

On 30 September, 40 mangonels began to bombard the western walls, to no avail. Inside, the city was in chaos, swollen with refugees, mainly women and children, and with very few warriors. After five days, Saladin shifted his focus to the north, and the bombardment continued with crossbowmen keeping the battlements clear and sappers digging into the foundations. After three more days, the walls were finally breached. Clearly, the city was doomed.

Officials came to discuss terms. At first Saladin refused, setting chivalry aside. "I want to take Jerusalem the way the Christians took it from the Muslims 91 years ago," he said, according to Imad al-Din. "The men I will slaughter and the women I will make slaves." In response Balian threatened to raze the city, leaving Saladin nothing: "We shall throw ourselves into the flames rather than accept destitution and shame." So Saladin abandoned violence for mercy.

Saladin watches as Christians leave Jerusalem after his conquest of the kingdom

THE MYTH AND THE MAN

Dr Suleiman Mourad, Professor of Religion at Smith College, offers an alternative view on the legend of Saladin

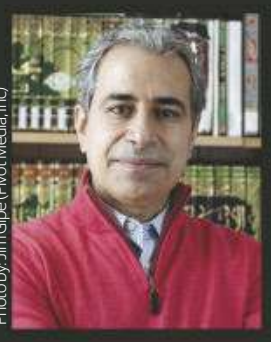


Photo by: JimGipe (Pivot Media,Inc)

What sources do we have to tell us who Saladin was, and how reliable are they?

Many contemporary sources about Saladin exist. Authors, including close confidants of his, projected onto him their desires and expectations. It is difficult to distinguish between the real Saladin and the image they wanted him to have. For instance, *Sultanic Marvels And Josephian Charms* by Saladin's advisor Ibn Shaddad (d.1234) conjures and equates the sultan (whose first name was Joseph) with biblical Joseph. Similarly, poets compared Saladin's conquest of Jerusalem on 2 October 1187 to the Prophet Muhammad's legendary Night Journey. (Saladin chose to capture the sacred city on that day knowing it was the anniversary of the Prophet's spiritual ride.) One sees, therefore, the effort in the Muslim sources to put Saladin on par with prophets rather than with comparable rulers.

What do we know about Saladin's beliefs and what motivated him?

Saladin was a shrewd politician. He spent his career contesting Muslim rivals and non-Muslim foes. He waged many wars, but was inclined to avoid battle whenever possible. He was merciful in some situations and ruthless in others. He was not exceptionally gifted as army commander but he was remarkably generous and spent lavishly, which made him very popular but caused regular headaches for his administration.

How do you think Saladin compared to other rulers of his era?

Saladin was of the same stock like many rulers in his day: coming to power through intrigues and assassinations, and having to spend his tenure fending off former comrades and family members. More importantly, Saladin existed in the shadow of his predecessor Sultan Nūr al-Dīn (d.1174), so much so that some historians thought of the two as constituting one epoch. Even when we talk about Saladin's main accomplishment (the liberation of Jerusalem), they believed Nūr al-Dīn laid down the groundwork and Saladin reaped the benefits.

Have attitudes and opinions of Saladin fluctuated in the many generations since his reign?

Saladin became the hero for many Sunnis who lived during his time in Egypt and greater Syria. By the second half of the 13th century, his legacy was outshined by the Mamluk sultan Baybars (r. 1260-1277), whose accomplishments include major victories against the Crusaders and the defeat of the Mongols. Until the 20th century, it was Baybars who were the better of the two. But the European fascination with Saladin won the day, and many Muslims pivoted back to him.

What would you say is the greatest misconception about Saladin?

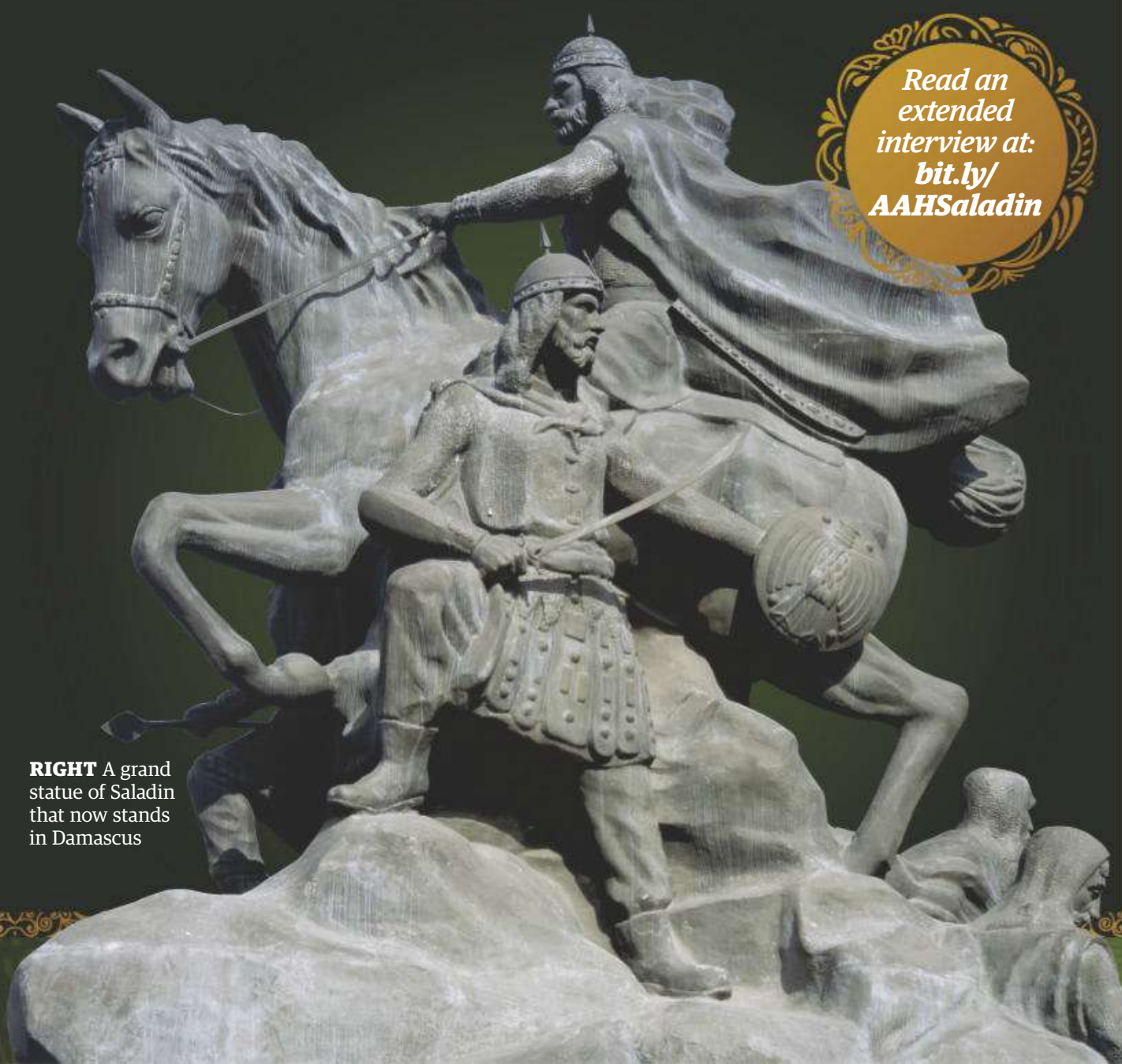
The greatest misconception about Saladin is that he was a philosophical and highly cultured man whose humanism towered above the Muslim and Crusader barbarians around him. This image was fashioned by European romanticists determined to condemn their own medieval history. They propagated the myth of Saladin to present him as a model for the new Europe.

The other misconception is about Saladin's military prowess. His major achievement – victory at Hattin in 1187 – was an anomaly. The Crusaders choose to camp in a barren spot with no access to water, exposed to the excessive heat of the July sun, which was a tragic miscalculation. Their utter defeat meant that there were few troops remaining to protect the Kingdom of Jerusalem, especially the Holy City. Saladin took advantage of that, yet most of his achievements were reversed when the army of the Third Crusade arrived in 1189.

What do you think Saladin means to people in today's world?

Saladin means different things to different groups. For white supremacists, Saladin embodies the clash of civilisations and symbolises the inherent animosity of Islam towards Christians and Christianity. For some Muslims and Arabs, Saladin is a symbol of resistance against Western hegemony (or Israeli occupation). Others, especially those interested in dialogue and inclusiveness, adore his European myth.

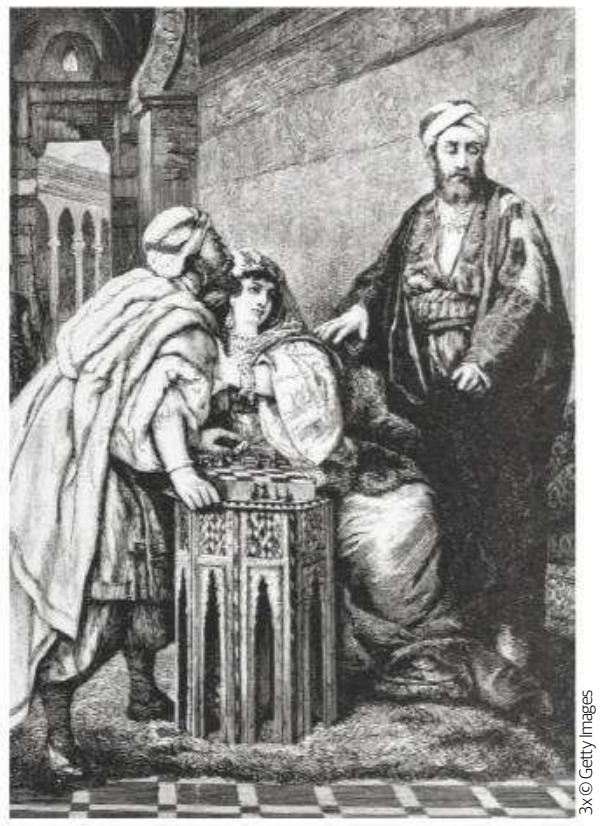
Read an extended interview at: ***bit.ly/AAHSaladin***



RIGHT A grand statue of Saladin that now stands in Damascus

LEFT A 20th century painting of the victorious Saladin entering Jerusalem

BELOW A depiction of a story from the play *Nathan The Wise*, where Saladin (right) is beaten at chess by his sister and insists she be rewarded by his sceptical treasurer



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The Christians would have to ransom themselves – 10 dinars for a man, five for a woman, one for a child – and hand over all their horses and weapons. What of those who could not pay, asked Balian, the aged and destitute? He offered a lump sum of 30,000 dinars of his own money. Saladin accepted.

Utter chaos followed as refugees streamed out of the city. Cash flowed into the hands of Saladin's officials and no one kept accounts. Inside and outside the city, desperate citizens sold their goods for almost nothing. Saladin, chivalrous again, let widows leave without payment and handed out ransom money to the poor and destitute. When officials remonstrated with him, he said Christians everywhere "will speak of the blessings we have showered upon them". Muslim jihad and Christian fervour could have led to appalling bloodshed but thanks to Saladin it didn't. And he was right – the retaking of Jerusalem sealed his reputation.

That was the highpoint of his career. Christian leaders appealed for help from all Europe, and Europe responded. Richard I of England (Lionheart, as he was known), Philip of France, and the German emperor Frederick I (known as Barbarossa, Red Beard) were the main leaders of the Third Crusade – three years (1189-92) of massacres, sieges, truces, victories and defeats. It almost all took place on the coast. True, Saladin preserved Jerusalem. But when war-weariness ended the Crusade, the peace allowed Christian enclaves to survive. In his long-term objective – to drive out the Crusaders – Saladin failed.

> "CHRISTIANS ADMIRED SALADIN AS HE EXEMPLIFIED SO-CALLED CHRISTIAN VIRTUES"

In late 1192, Saladin, now 54 years old, was tired and sick. Back in his home in Damascus, his health continued to decline. After 12 days of illness, on 4 March 1193, a sheikh was reading to him from the *Quran* when Saladin died. Carried through wailing crowds, he was buried nearby, leaving a unique reputation. Muslims adored him – mainly Sunnis, for Shias bore the brunt of his ruthlessness. Christians admired him because he exemplified so-called Christian virtues, in contrast to the behaviour of their own leaders.

His charisma was rooted in his character and leadership skills, many of which define good leadership today. A loving family, strong mentors and firm beliefs underpinned Saladin's self-confidence, and his ego was put in the service of his cause. He could be ruthless but was always ready to be generous. He had the curiosity of a scholar, the empathy of a parent, and absolutely no interest in self-enrichment (he left hardly any possessions). He willingly risked his life and accepted suffering. He kept his promises. He cared for his fighting men and the women in his life. Perhaps his greatest quality was his acceptance that even his enemies (except Reynald) had causes, emotions and opinions that deserved respect. There have been few to match him.

The Diva Queen

Famed for her intelligence and wit, Christina, Queen of Sweden was not afraid to defy convention or break the rules

Written by Jessica Leggett

An unconventional queen with a fiery temper, Christina of Sweden is undoubtedly one of history's most enigmatic figures. The last member of the Vasa dynasty to rule Sweden, she was born in the Tre Kronor castle in 1626, the only surviving child of King Gustavus Adolphus and Maria Eleonora of Brandenburg.

A strong and hairy baby with a loud cry, it was mistakenly announced at first that Christina was a boy. When the error was realised a few hours later, nobody was brave enough to tell the king, forcing Christina's aunt to gather her up and place her in front of Gustavus so he could see the truth for himself. However, it's often said that Gustavus was not upset that he'd had a daughter, apparently declaring, "She will be clever, for she has deceived us all!"

As king, Gustavus had transformed Sweden into one of the greatest powers in Europe. He was also a major leader during the Thirty Years' War, a conflict that originally broke out between Catholics and Protestants across the Holy Roman Empire, which ultimately changed the balance of power in Europe. Hailed as the protector of Protestantism, Gustavus was killed at the Battle of Lützen in 1632, leaving Christina as Sweden's new monarch just one month shy of her sixth birthday.

Anticipating his death, Gustavus had already arranged for parliament to swear an oath to his daughter and secure her right to inherit the throne. He had also left instructions for a regency council to be formed for Christina, led by his trusted and experienced Lord High Chancellor Axel Oxenstierna, who was widely revered by his contemporaries for his wise counsel.

This was a smart move, especially as Christina's mother, who had struggled with her mental health for some time, became increasingly erratic. After her husband's death, Maria Eleonora had Gustavus' heart embalmed and placed in a gold casket that she had hung over her bed, which she forced her daughter to sleep in with her. In the end, Oxenstierna arranged for Maria Eleonora to be moved to Gripsholm Castle and away from the young queen.

The late king had arranged tutors to ensure that Christina would receive the same education as a prince. She was taught fencing, horse-riding, languages,

Main image: © Alamy **Main font:** © Getty Images

philosophy, religion, classics and even how to hunt bears. With her voracious appetite for knowledge and her habit of studying for several hours a day, it is unsurprising that Christina became one of the most learned women in Europe. When she was a teenager, Oxenstierna proudly declared: "She is not at all like a female."

From a young age, Christina developed a passionate interest in the arts and sciences. Sweden was considered cold and unsophisticated in comparison to the renowned cultured courts found in Rome and Paris, and the queen dreamed of transforming Stockholm into the cultural capital of Northern Europe.

After reaching her majority in 1644, Christina made a name for herself as a dedicated collector by spending lavishly on scientific instruments, drama, music and art, while also sending her agents out to purchase the finest items from across Europe. The queen also cultivated one of the greatest libraries on the Continent and over the next few years several leading scholars, theologians, scientists, authors and philosophers were enticed to visit.

In 1649, she famously invited the French philosopher René Descartes to her court to establish a new scientific academy and become her private tutor. However, when Descartes finally arrived in Sweden in the dead of winter he discovered that the queen could only meet with him three times a week at 5am.

The pair clashed in the few sessions that they had together, with Descartes left frustrated by the queen's fascination with Ancient Greek, while she disliked his mechanical philosophy. Unused to Sweden's cold and bitter climate Descartes died, supposedly from pneumonia, in Stockholm in February 1650, just a few months after his arrival.

Christina was known for her high-handedness and her determination to get her own way. As queen regnant, she was expected to compromise – something she hated – with her government. Having been raised as queen since she was six, Christina wanted to command, not govern, her realm and any time she felt that her authority or opinion was being questioned, she lashed out angrily.

She quickly clashed with Oxenstierna after reaching her majority and actively tried to push him aside. In 1645 the leading players involved in the Thirty Years' War agreed to meet for negotiations. Oxenstierna wished to continue the conflict, which had seen Sweden make significant territorial gains, and sent his son to negotiate. However, Christina disagreed and sent her own delegate with instructions to conclude peace by any means necessary.

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TOP A devout Protestant, Christina's father King Gustavus was killed at the Battle of Lützen

ABOVE An 18th-century depiction of Christina and the philosopher Descartes in a dispute

BELOW A portrait of Christina in her later years

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The Peace of Westphalia was eventually agreed in 1648 and Oxenstierna was disappointed, believing that he could have negotiated a better deal for Sweden. Meanwhile, as a result of the negotiations, Christina gained hundreds of paintings, manuscripts, books, statues and other items that had belonged to the collection of Rudolf II, the late Holy Roman Emperor.

In 1649 the queen frustrated her advisers by steadfastly refusing to marry. Repulsed by the idea of childbirth, she had no intention of producing a successor for the throne and instead named her first cousin Charles as her heir presumptive. This, combined with her masculine behaviour, posture, unruly hair, crude sense of humour and preference for wearing male clothing, quickly led to rumours regarding her sexuality.

Many believed Christina had an affair with Countess Ebba Sparre, her close friend and lady-in-waiting. But Christina also had close relationships with several male favourites and she enjoyed shocking people with her scandalous, affectionate – and at times erotic – behaviour.

Even so, by the beginning of the 1650s Christina had become disillusioned with her role as queen and she had no desire to rule. Although the artistic culture in Sweden had improved during her reign, it was still nowhere near the high standard of that in Rome, which she deeply admired.

Another reason for her disillusionment was her wish to convert to Roman Catholicism, which she had been attracted to since her youth, particularly for its support of celibacy. An avid reader and free-thinker, Christina had developed doubts about Lutheran teachings and was frustrated when the conservative clergy of Sweden refused to consider reform.

Of course, as the head of the Swedish Lutheran Church, Christina's hope to convert was in direct conflict with her responsibilities as ruler. The fact that Gustavus had fought and died for his Protestant beliefs made the queen's desire even more troubling. As his daughter and successor, she should have been championing her father's sacrifice and religious devotion.

In 1651, Christina suffered a nervous breakdown after years of spending several hours a day working and studying. That year her popularity in Sweden took a hit when, in a fit of fury, she had Arnold Johan Messenius, her royal historiographer, and his 17-year-old son executed after Messenius openly objected to her policies and accused her of being a 'Jezebel'.

Image source: wiki/Uppsala Art Museum

ABOVE A painting of Tre Kronor castle in Stockholm, where Christina was born

Tired of ruling, Christina attempted to abdicate her throne but relented when her council pleaded with her to stay, with the promise that she would not be pressured to marry. Nevertheless, in 1654 the queen again stated her intention to give up her crown, much to the distress of her advisers, with Oxenstierna asserting that she would regret her decision.

Negotiations were held with the Riksdag regarding the queen's future financial security, with Christina being granted a pension and revenues from certain Swedish dominions. Having thought about her abdication for some time, Christina had secretly arranged for several of her valuables, including books, statues, paintings and manuscripts, to be sent to Antwerp in 1653.

Christina's abdication ceremony was held on 6 June 1654 at Uppsala Castle. The queen wore all of her royal regalia, which was ceremonially removed from her to symbolise her abdication. Count Per Brahe the Younger had been tasked with removing Christina's crown but he refused, leaving Christina to remove it herself. It was a fitting moment for a queen who had always played by her own rules.

With Charles ascending the throne as King Charles X Gustav, Christina left Sweden days after her abdication, embarking on her journey to her new home in Rome. After reaching the border between Sweden and Denmark, Christina cut her hair and changed into male attire, partly to disguise herself as she travelled, but also because it was her preferred way to dress.

> "CHRISTINA WAS KNOWN FOR HER HIGH-HANDEDNESS AND HER DETERMINATION TO GET HER OWN WAY"

Christina did not immediately head to Rome but instead stopped off in the Spanish Netherlands. It's thought this was to hide her intention to convert to Catholicism, which was a contentious issue in Sweden and would have put her revenues at risk. Nevertheless, she was always one to splurge and quickly found herself running out of money.

Christina eventually converted to Catholicism on Christmas Eve during a private ceremony in Brussels. The conversion was initially kept quiet to avoid controversy back in Sweden, but Christina publicly acknowledged that she had converted in November 1655, while she was in Innsbruck, Austria.

That December, 18 months after leaving Sweden, Christina finally arrived

A SCANDALOUS RELATIONSHIP

Was the queen really in love with her lady-in-waiting?

Without a doubt, Queen Christina's most famous same-sex relationship was her rumoured affair with Countess Ebba Sparre. Sparre was frequently described as a traditional, feminine beauty, a direct contrast to Christina, whose masculine appearance and mannerisms increased assumptions that she was homosexual – especially when she made it clear that she had no intention of ever marrying or having children in her future.

The women were known to share a bed together, which was not an uncommon practice at the time, but the queen enjoyed shocking those around her. Christina relished the opportunity to provoke others about her relationship with Sparre and what they got up to together when they were alone and in private. Nevertheless, the queen was also responsible for arranging Sparre's marriage to Count Jakob Kasimir de la Gardie, the younger brother of one of her male favourites.

Christina and Sparre frequently wrote letters to one another and they continued this practice even after the queen had abdicated and settled in Rome. Christina's letters to Sparre were often full of passionate language, with the queen giving her the nickname Belle. But she also wrote similar, emotional letters to other women too, including those that she had never met.

Although there has been much emphasis placed on their relationship by historians, we don't know for certain what the true nature of Christina and Sparre's relationship was. Even so, there is no denying that the speculation around the supposed love affair has continued to play a major role in the narratives that are written about Christina today.

Image source: wiki/National Gallery of Art

in Rome to great fanfare. Her entrance into the city was arranged by Pope Alexander VII himself, who saw the conversion of a Protestant, former queen regnant as positive propaganda for the Catholic Church. There were fireworks, banquets, operas, jousting and various other celebrations held in her honour for over a month and Christina even attended Mass with the Pope himself, where she received the Holy Sacrament.

Christina's new home in Rome was the Palazzo Farnese, where she quickly began building upon her artistic patronage, supporting scholars and artists and founding Rome's first public theatre. She also started a literary circle focused on theatre, music, debate, poetry and literature, which ultimately developed into the Pontifical Academy of Arcadia in 1690. All the while, the former queen was running up large debts, worsened by the fact that Sweden had stopped paying her revenue after her conversion to Catholicism was announced.

Never one to shy away from a scandal, Christina continued her habit of forming close relationships with men, which sent gossip swirling around. Her close relationship with Cardinal Azzolino, who served as her representative in the Catholic Church, and his repeated visits to her palace led to widespread speculation that they were lovers.

© Getty Images

ABOVE A joust of carousels held in honour of Christina's arrival in Rome, February 1656

BELOW Christina was renowned as one of the most learned women in Europe

Christina's scandalous behaviour in Rome caused problems just as it had done in Sweden and led to a strain on her relationship with the Vatican. Despite giving up her throne to convert, she was no more devout to Catholicism than she had been to Protestant Lutheranism.

In her new home, Christina had the independence and freedom that she had always craved. But, as she settled into her life in Rome, she soon understood that she no longer held that much importance without her crown. This must have been a sobering realisation for a woman who had been treated with deference her whole life and still saw herself as a queen – the Pope himself would famously describe Christina as "a queen without a realm".

It wasn't long before the former queen set her sights on gaining a new throne. In 1656, she opened negotiations with Cardinal Mazarin, the chief minister of France, suggesting that she should become the queen of Naples if France successfully conquered the kingdom from the Spanish. Not only would this restore her ability to rule, but it would have allowed her to become financially independent from Sweden.

However, her hopes for the crown were soon dashed. While staying at the Palace of Fontainebleau during a visit to France in October 1657 to discuss the plan, Christina controversially ordered the execution of her equerry Gian Monaldeschi. Although an angry Christina claimed that he had betrayed her, she failed to explain how and instead insisted it was within her royal authority to have him killed.

This incident greatly impacted her popularity. After the death of her cousin King Charles in 1660, she returned to Sweden and declared her intention to resume the throne if Charles' son and successor, a young five-year-old boy, died. However, now that Christina was a Catholic, the mere thought of her returning to govern a Protestant realm was impossible. She would later set her sights on becoming queen of Poland after her cousin, John II Casimir Vasa, abdicated the throne, but this also came to nothing.

Christina returned to Rome for the last time in 1668 and she remained there for the rest of her life, continuing her artistic patronage and even producing an unfinished autobiography. She died at the Palazzo Corsini in April 1689 and although she had requested a simple burial, she was given a huge ceremony to emphasise her decision to sacrifice her throne for Catholicism. She was laid to rest within St Peter's Basilica, where she remains one of only three women to be buried there.

Free-spirited, unapologetic and courageous, Christina was a queen who did what she wanted, even if her behaviour at times was reckless. She never once bent to the expectation of others and lived by her own code of conduct, regardless of criticism – and her extraordinary life continues to fascinate us all over three centuries later.

"In her new home, Christina had the independence and freedom that she had always craved"

The Queen's Legacy

How do fictional portrayals of Christina match up to reality?

The various depictions of Queen Christina on screen and stage have played an important part in her legacy and how we see her today. To a varying extent there is always a focus on her sexuality, relationships, masculine attitude and clothing, combined with her disillusionment for ruling Sweden.

Arguably the most iconic movie based on Christina's life is the 1933 film *Queen Christina*, starring Greta Garbo (right) as the enigmatic monarch. Facing huge pressure to marry and produce an heir, Garbo's Christina argues with her councillors and firmly states that she will die "a bachelor and not an old maid". Although Christina is shown to have a close relationship with Ebba Sparre, her sexuality is not explicitly explored, which is unsurprising considering that homosexuality was still illegal in the 1930s.

Instead, the queen falls in love with a male Spanish ambassador – a more 'acceptable' love interest – and it's implied that her inability to pursue this relationship is a major driving force behind her decision to abdicate. The film provides a more romantic depiction of Christina's life, as the screenwriters believed that the real reasons for her abdication were not interesting enough for a Hollywood film.

Meanwhile 2015's *The Girl King*, starring Malin Buska as Christina, is the first film to address the queen's sexuality and show her pursing a romance with Sparre despite the possible consequences. Wearing male attire and rejecting religious, political and gender norms, Christina builds a cultured court while grappling with her lesbian affair and attraction to Catholicism, all while surrounded by enemy plots.

The differences between these two films demonstrate how Christina's story, like so many other historical figures, has been altered over time to suit particular audiences - creating a tangled narrative that often leaves us searching for the truth underneath.

3x © Alamy

A painting of Christina on horseback by Sebastien Bourdon

LYSENKO

STALIN'S SCIENTIST

The Soviet 'expert' who ruled the USSR's agricultural policies and was responsible for the deaths of millions

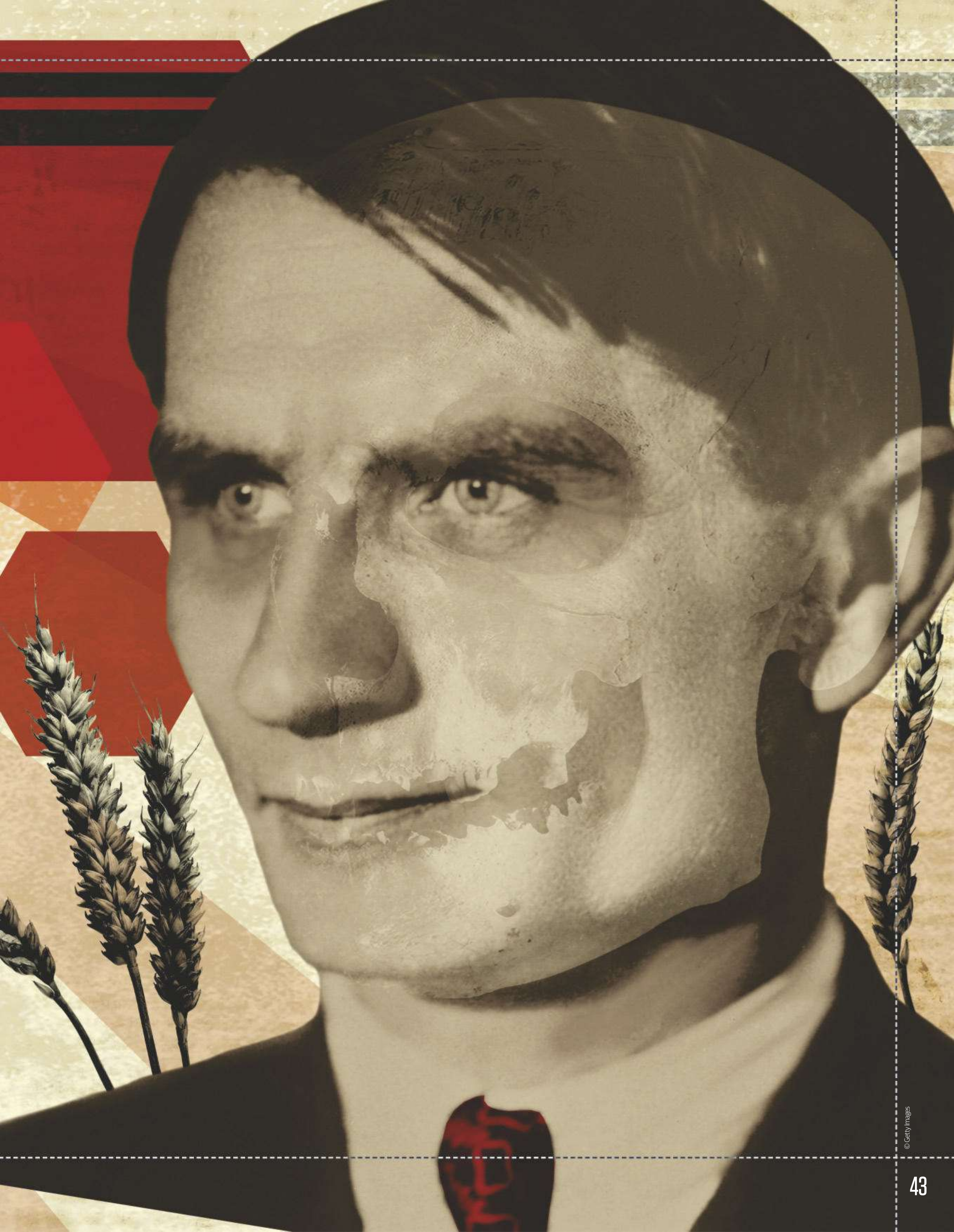
Written by Callum McKelvie

> **"If you want a particular result you obtain it... I need only people who will obtain what I require" – Trofim Lysenko**

Anyone reading the above quote, with no prior knowledge of the speaker, and assuming them to be some malevolent dictator, would be forgiven. Ostensibly, Trofim Lysenko was an agricultural scientist, though when examining his actions one discovers an individual who was perhaps more suited to the former role than the latter. At his death on 20th November 1976, there was no hint of sorrow among the scientific community, no suggestion that the world had lost a great scientific mind – only condemnation.

This is hardly surprising, as Lysenko was responsible for not only (to quote an issue of *Current Biology*) "the effective destruction of genetics in the USSR and the arrest of outstanding geneticists such as Nikolai Vavilov", but also for prolonging famines that killed millions. Yet who was this deadly scientist who is now the subject of a revival of interest?

Trofim Lysenko was born on 19 September 1898 to a peasant family in Karlivka, Poltava Oblast in Ukraine. The oldest of the family's four children, Lysenko would busy himself about the farm in his youth, giving him a taste for agriculture at an early age. It would be 20 years, however, until the young man would turn this passion into an academic career. Learning to read and write only during his late teens, he obtained a place at the Uman School of Horticulture in 1921. In 1925, he obtained his doctorate after studying at the Kiev Agricultural Institute. Now in his mid-twenties, he was offered the opportunity to put his theoretical studies to more practical use at an 'agricultural experiment' station in Azerbaijan. It was here that he first dabbled with a process that would form the basis for many of his disastrous theories. Lysenko undertook experiments exposing seeds to low temperatures, a process known as 'vernalization'. This process is often used to induce flowering earlier than usual, or to allow winter wheat to grow in earlier months. While much of this was already known at the time, something in Lysenko's approach (and perhaps his peasant background) caught the attention of the ruling Communist Party and its tyrannical leader Joseph Stalin. Historian and author of *Lysenko's Ghost*, Loren Graham, explained in a 2017 interview on



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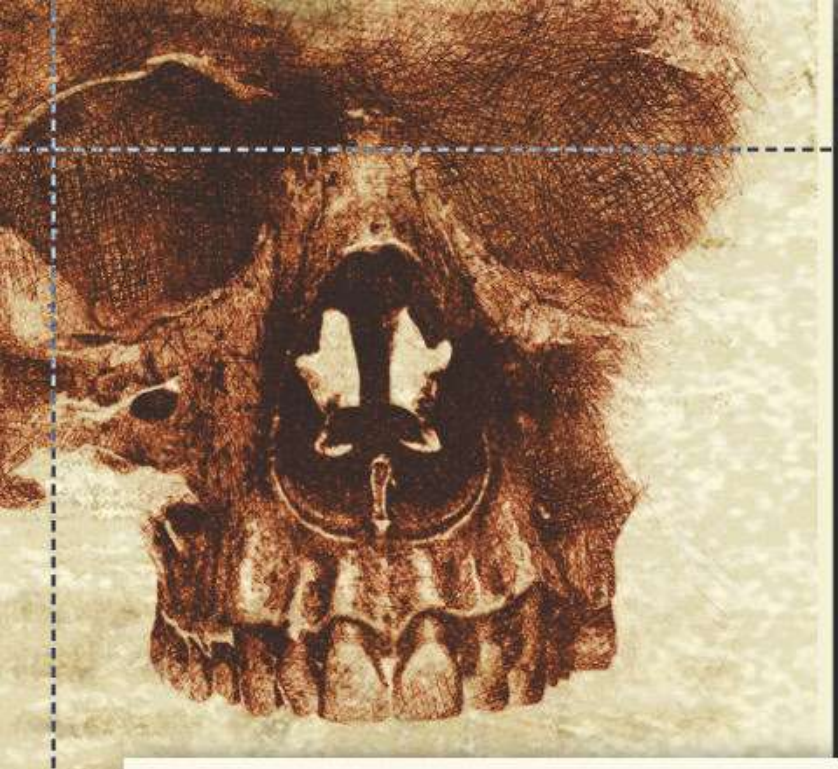
WBUR radio station: "There was an agricultural crisis and they needed more crops, higher yields. Part of the reason why they were in crisis, and part of the reason why there was famine in some areas, was because of the recent [communist] collectivisation program in agriculture."

In the 1920s the communist government had moved forward with its intention of transforming Soviet agriculture, initiating a programme of collectivisation. As well as increasing agricultural output, the programme was intended to reduce the power of the 'kulaks' – a group of extremely wealthy and powerful peasants. The programme asked peasants to voluntarily give up their private land to a collective – a much larger, more industrial farm. However, the voluntary system proved unsuccessful and by 1928 peasants were forced to join. Many refused and serious problems arose when peasants began slaughtering their livestock and destroying farming machinery. Those who had refused now faced arrest and a one-way trip to a prison camp, which resulted in millions being deported. With a vastly reduced agricultural workforce, not to mention livestock numbers and equipment, production was vastly below what the regime had been expecting. The Soviet government's decision to take vast amounts of agricultural produce for industrial investment resulted in a major famine.

In 1930, Lysenko was transferred to Odessa and the Ukrainian All-Union Institute of Selection and Genetics. It was here that his interest in vernalization would take on a new and ultimately dangerous angle due to his encountering the work of Russian horticulturist Ivan Michurin. In 1955, a US Special Sub-Committee on the Investigation of Federal Activities described Michurin as, "A little-known Russian horticulturist who believed in the hereditary transmission of acquired characteristics." Whereas previously vernalization allowed the elimination of winter wheat growth cycles and early flowering, Lysenko now believed that exposing plant seeds to further temperature experiments would not be necessary. In the most basic of terms, Lysenko believed that characteristics acquired by one crop could be learnt. As Loren Graham explains: "Winter wheat and spring wheat are two different varieties. You have to decide which one you're going to plant. He maintained he could convert one into the other just by changing the environmental conditions, and that he could do this in just one or two generations. Why? Because acquired characteristics can be inherited." This is most vividly explained by media statements that Siberia could be transformed into a land of 'oranges and lemons'.

For a government whose peasant population was facing famine, this was a welcome discovery. Lysenko was quick to point out the very practical uses of his ideas, which proved beneficial in a period when all experiments required not only government funding but approval. The young scientist also



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TOP Lysenko measuring wheat in one of the Kolkohz fields near Odessa in the 1930s

ABOVE Joseph Stalin gave his full support to Lysenko and his controversial theories

RIGHT Peasants working in the fields during the Great Leap Forward in China, 1958. The resulting famine killed around 40 million people

© Getty Images

showed himself able to worm his way close to Stalin himself, his peasant background and 'humble beginnings' proving useful political propaganda. He even earned the affectionate nickname 'The Barefoot Scientist'. As horticulturist Jules Janick states: "For political reasons, the concept of changing inheritance by nurture was considered to fit with communist ideology." Originally placed in command of Soviet agriculture, Lysenko decreed that seeds should be planted close together (seeds from the same 'class', supposedly, never competed with one another) and forbade the use of pesticides. The result was that the famine, caused by the collectivisation programme, was prolonged and peaked between 1932-33, resulting in the deaths of 7 million people.

Yet despite this, Lysenko seemed unable to lose the support of Stalin. He continued to preach his methods and his position seemed secure. With an almost unprecedented amount of power, Lysenko set his sites on the field of scientific study for which he harboured the most hatred: genetics. Michurin's theories had created a divide between genetics researchers and individuals such as Lysenko as part of an ongoing international misunderstanding between what was evolution and what was genetics. Geneticists' work continually undermined Lysenko's theories of inheritance and he sought to end this once and for all.

At this point, it is perhaps best to switch perspectives and continue the narrative of Lysenko's assault on the field of genetics by focussing on one Nikolai Vavilov. A student of William Bateson (widely considered to be the father of genetics) at Cambridge University, Vavilov was already an established scientist when Lysenko's rise to power began. He had served as head of the Lenin Academy of Agricultural

"'We shall go to the pyre, we shall burn, but we shall not retreat from our convictions'"

Studies, establishing a staggering 400 separate research institutes, not to mention travelling extensively (from Iran to Ethiopia and Afghanistan to South America) collecting over 50,000 varieties of wild plants and some 31,000 specimens of wheat.

It was these expeditions that caused Vavilov to postulate a theory that would ultimately lead to his downfall. He decreed that farmers had never intentionally attempted to domesticate the rye plant, but had plucked it from the fields considering it to be a weed, saving the rye that instead looked like a useful wheat. Over time, rye eventually mimicked wheat, an idea which became known as Vavilovian Mimicry. However, this came into direct conflict with the fanciful notions of Lysenko. Vavilov posited that it would take multiple generations for rye to merely mimic wheat, Lysenko believed he could alter the nature of the seeds in a single step. The campaign against him began in 1935, when Vavilov was replaced as president of the Academy of Agricultural studies. A year later, scientists who opposed Lysenko and Stalin were rounded up and some – such as biologist Georgii Karpechenko – would be murdered by the state.

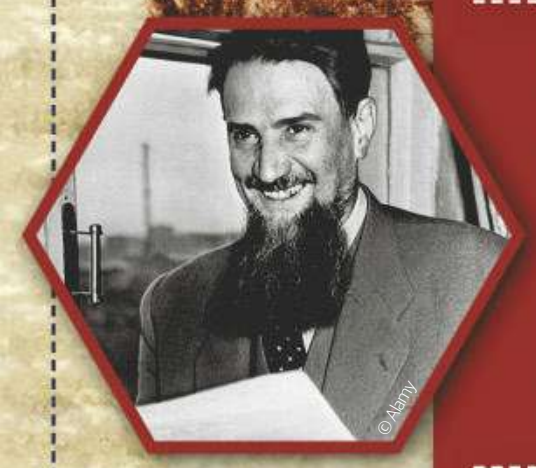
Sensing that time was running out, Vavilov would make a profoundly heartfelt comment at the Leningrad Institute, stating: "We shall go to the pyre, we shall burn, but we shall not retreat from our convictions." In 1940 the final blow would come during a private confrontation with Lysenko, his outspoken words condemning him. Months later, while in eastern Poland on an expedition to study wild plants, a car approached Vavilov and bundled him inside, in an arrest sanctioned by NKVD head Lavrenty Beria himself. Charged with spying for Britain and tortured, Vavilov would die a year later of a heart attack in solitary confinement.

For the next 14 years Lysenko enjoyed the relative safety of his position. Yet a serious threat to his control of the Soviet sciences occurred when on 29 February 1953 Joseph Stalin was found dead. The following period would be a tumultuous one in Russian history as a vicious power struggle took place between Soviet leaders – Lysenko would have been right to have been worried. After Nikita Khrushchev was proclaimed the new ruler in 1956 a period of 'de-Stalinisation' began, a bold denouncement of the deceased dictator's policies. Khrushchev encouraged scientific exchanges with the West and sanctioned the release of numerous scientific political prisoners. In 1956, as the scientific community began to target Lysenko, the agronomist found himself removed from his position as president of the Lenin Academy of Agricultural Sciences.

Yet Lysenko was far from finished. Disagreements had begun between Khrushchev and the scientific community and already support was being rekindled for Lysenko. As Simon Ings notes in his book *Stalin And The Scientists*: "The problem was that Khrushchev was as much of a sucker for homespun folk wisdom as the rest of his generation." Ings adds that: "With hindsight it's easy to see that it would be

SOVIET SCIENTISTS

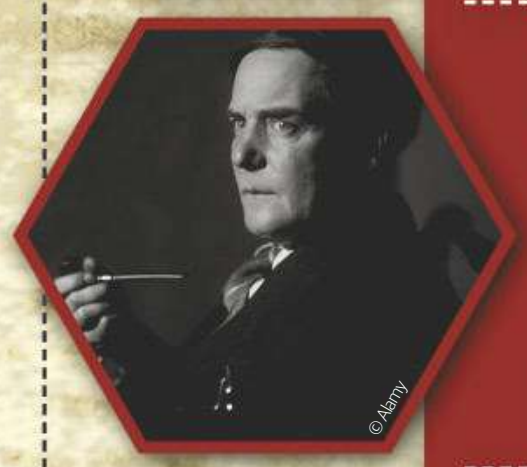
Five of Communist Russia's more prestigious scientific minds



Igor Kurchatov (1903-60)

NUCLEAR PHYSICIST

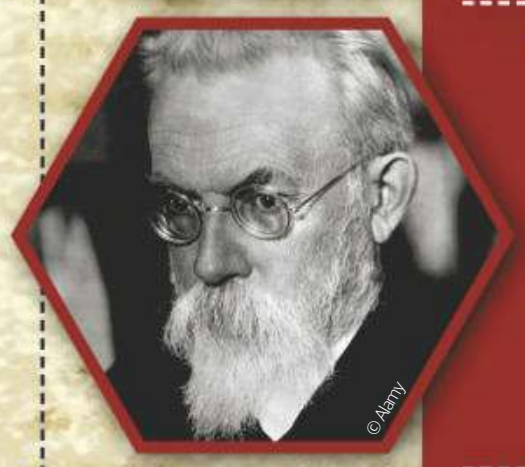
Known as the 'father of the Soviet bomb', Kurchatov is best remembered as the director of the USSR's atomic bomb project. In 1943 he was appointed head of the Soviet nuclear weapons programme and, following Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Stalin ordered a Soviet bomb to be produced by 1948. In 1949, First Lightning was tested successfully. Following this Kurchatov advocated for a more peaceful development of nuclear technology.



Pyotr Kapitsa (1894-1984)

PHYSICS

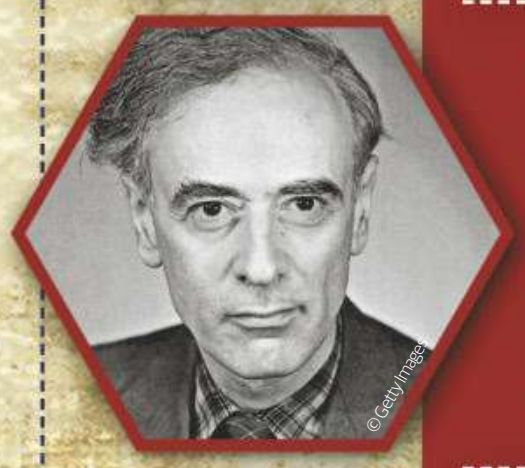
Kapitsa is primarily remembered for his research into low-temperature physics, winning the Nobel Prize in 1978. Working in the UK, he developed a new type of helium liquifier, before being ordered to continue his work in the Soviet Union. He maintained a close connection with Stalin but following a conflict with Beria lost much of his power. His scientific (though not political) positions were restored under Khrushchev.



Vladimir Vernadsky (1863-1945)

GEOCHEMISTRY AND BIOGEOCHEMISTRY

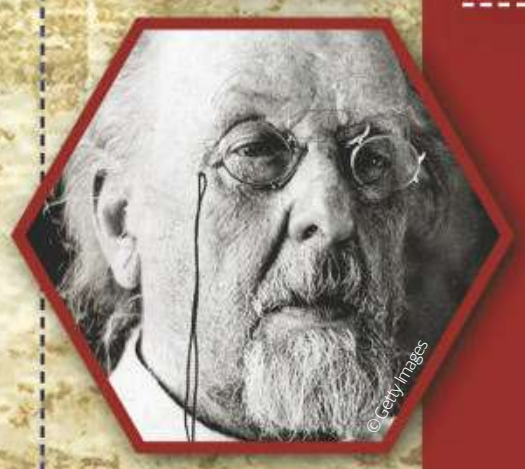
Following the revolution Vernadsky founded and directed numerous research projects and activities, perhaps most famously the biogeochemical laboratory of the Academy of Sciences. Vernadsky is considered a pioneer in the field of geochemistry and is regarded as the founder of the theory of the biosphere, studying the effect of living organisms on the Earth's crust.



Lev Landau (1908-68)

PHYSICS

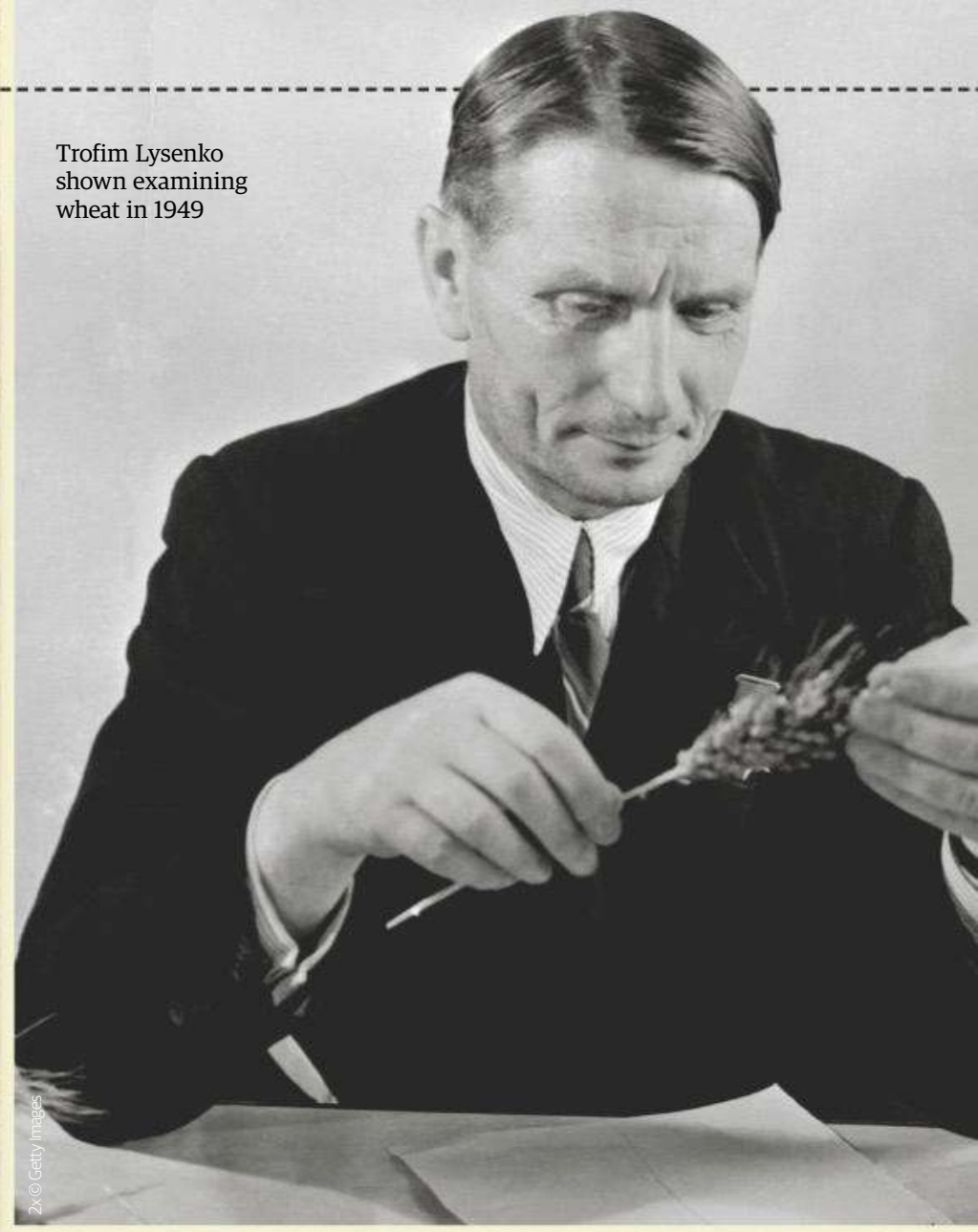
One of the founders of the quantum theory of condensed matter, his contribution to this field was recognised with a Nobel Prize in 1962. An outspoken individual, he very nearly became a victim of the purges in 1937 and was indeed arrested in 1938. However, Kapitsa was able to petition for his release. One of his great discoveries was in explaining the quantum theory behind Kapitsa's discovery of superfluidity.



Konstantin Tsiolkovsky (1857-1935)

ROCKETRY

A research scientist in the field of rocketry, aeronautics and astronautics, Tsiolkovsky developed his interest in mathematics at the age of 16. Between 1895-96 he published a number of groundbreaking works on theoretical space travel, and he is remembered for his pioneering work in the theory of rocket science, particularly his use of wind tunnels.



Trofim Lysenko shown examining wheat in 1949

only a matter of time before Khrushchev fell under the spell of Trofim Lysenko, completely and unquestioningly, in a way Stalin never had." Lysenko's promises of advancements in the growing of corn and breeding of livestock soon ensured that by 1961 he was reinstated as head of agriculture.

Yet the pieces that eventually ensured the collapse of Lysenko's empire were already in place as events occurred that could not be ignored. In 1958, nuclear waste buried near the town of Blagoveshchensk exploded and the resulting dust spread for hundreds of miles, inflicting the populations of numerous towns and villages with severe radiation sickness. Without the study of radiation genetics or radiology, it proved impossible to treat the victims properly. The Soviet ban on genetics became the centre of a mass campaign by numerous scientists, whose voices could no longer be silenced. Almost immediately, the legalisation of genetics (though only for radiology and medicine) was allowed.

However, Lysenko's teachings had not yet been totally discredited and at this point one of the most tragic consequences of his theories occurred, not in Russia but in China. Following the communist revolution of 1949, Chairman Mao Zedong had aligned himself closely with the Soviet Union. One of the results of this was that Chinese agricultural scientists were immersed in Lysenkoism; as one Beijing doctor commented: "We had to change textbooks and rename things in Lysenko's honour." In 1958, Mao personally drafted an eight-page document which outlined agricultural policies based on Lysenko's theories, with titles such as "Deep Ploughing", "Close Planting", "Increased Irrigation" and, crucially, "Pest Control". This would be most vividly illustrated in a policy that became known as "Sparrowcide". This involved peasants descending on their fields with whatever pots and pans they could clang in order to keep up a continuous amount of noise. This prevented the birds from landing, becoming so exhausted that they eventually

dropped out of the sky. Competitions were held, with regions pitted against each other to see who could be responsible for the most avine fatalities. Yet one important fact escaped their notice. As journalist Jemimah Steinfeld notes: "Millions of sparrows, perhaps even hundreds of millions, were killed. The measure, though, left crops vulnerable. Pests such as locusts became the real winners as they had lost a major predator." The damage was done, and a continued misuse of poisons and deforestation created a famine that killed up to 45 million people.

Back in Russia, the end of Lysenko was already in sight. "Trofim D. Lysenko, the controversial Marxist biologist, was criticized by name today for the first time since a campaign against his genetic views began with Nikita S. Khrushchev's downfall last month," stated a *New York Times* article on 10 November 1964. Slowly but surely, the net had begun to close around Lysenko. Following the fall of Khrushchev, Lysenko was left with very little support. For two years he would manage to keep some relative level of safety, but his followers were deserting him and for decades he had failed to deliver effective results. The disastrous events in China most likely played a crucial role as well, providing further deaths that could (directly or not) be laid at the door of the agronomist. A commission was sent to Lysenko's experimental research farm in Moscow's Lenin Hills and all records were confiscated. A few months later the results of their findings were made public, disgracing Lysenko and ensuring an end to his career. In 1976, after decades of tyranny, Lysenko died in disgrace at the age of 78.

Yet his ghost refuses to fade away. A recent and unusual development in the story of Lysenko is his contemporary rediscovery by fringe groups within Russia. The field of 'epigenetics', which has posited that in some (and this must be stressed, only *some*) cases traits can be inherited has caused some groups to now claim that the long-dead scientist was right after all. Yet this in itself has proven somewhat dangerous, as Loren Graham states: "This led in Russia to many old communists, who are still around, saying, 'Oh, Lysenko was right after all!' So there has been this kind of resurgence. Most academic biologists won't have anything to do with it. They know that it's wrong. But it has to be said that one or two established biologists in Russia have joined the Lysenko bandwagon."

"Lysenko is a chilling reminder of why fact should never become subject to political fiction"

The story of Lysenko remains a poignant and important one. It's the story of how one man was able to turn politics against scientific truth. Lysenko was not only responsible for limiting scientific freedoms by restricting the study of specific fields such as genetics, he was also responsible for ruthlessly enforcing this restriction. Numerous scientists whose theories and ideals directly clashed with those of Lysenko, or who attempted to expose his fraudulent theories, were sent to prison camps or executed. Not only this, but by not recognising or listening to the criticisms directed towards his work, Lysenko can be said to have been responsible for the deaths of millions who perished through famine in the Soviet Union and China. In this era of fake news and as the world continues to fight the Covid-19 pandemic, Lysenko is a chilling reminder of why fact should never become subject to political fiction.

BELOW-LEFT Lysenko receiving a gold medal from Konstantin Pysin, USSR deputy agriculture minister, in 1962

BELOW Farmers from a Soviet collective march to work in the fields, 1931

6 WATERY FOLKLORE WONDERS

From trickster demi-gods to sunken cities, many fantastical and fabulous tales are waiting to be discovered in the seas and rivers of the world

Written by Willow Winsham

© Getty Images

With such vast amounts of the world covered by seas and rivers, it's hardly surprising that many, many stories have grown up around them over the millennia. Countless numbers of peoples have depended on the sea for their lives and livelihoods throughout the history of mankind, and it's this very fact that links societies and cultures from across the globe. In the folklore of all continents there are tales and beliefs about seas and rivers, with striking similarities the world over.

All powerful, the sea gives life but also takes it away, inspiring fear, awe and reverence in equal measure. Mermaids lurk beneath the waves, while sirens sing their tempting songs, luring the unwary to their watery ends. From ghost ships and sea monsters, river spirits and waterfalls, *Treasury Of Folklore: Seas & Rivers* explores the depths of belief about the sea, exploring such common themes as adventure, love, loss, betrayal and hope. Join us now, if you dare, for a whirlwind voyage through some of the most wonderful folktales, myths and legends of the oceans from around the world.

EXPERT BIO

WILLOW WINSHAM

Winsham is a historian, author and co-founder of the social media phenomenon that is *Folklore Thursday* alongside Dee Dee Chainey. Their new book *Treasury of Folklore: Seas & Rivers* is out now, published by Batsford.

With the discovery of the jinni, the fisherman finally found his luck changed for the better, as the sultan rewarded him with great riches

The fisherman and the jinni

The best things come to those who wait

This tale is from the Middle Eastern *One Thousand And One Nights*. A poor fisherman worked hard to support his large family but often his efforts were in vain, his nets remaining empty more often than not. One day the man thought his luck had improved as his net was weighed down, but his hopes were dashed when he found a dead donkey inside. Two more times he cast his nets, two more times he was disappointed, despite singing the praises of God. The fourth time he begged God to help him, only to find a stoppered jar in his nets.

Opening the jar revealed nothing but smoke, when suddenly the smoke spiralled upward to reveal a jinni. The fisherman's luck was just as bad as ever, as the jinni, trapped for centuries, had vowed to kill whoever freed him. The clever fisherman, however, managed to trap the jinni again by asking how he managed to fit into the small container.

The jinni begged for his freedom, promising the man a reward in return. True to his word, the jinni revealed the location of beautiful coloured fish, of which the fisherman caught four. The fisherman took them to the sultan as instructed, who rewarded him greatly for his efforts.

The legend of Cristalda and Pizzomunno

True love never dies

In Vieste, Italy, the seaside village known as the Pearl of the Gargano, lived a brave young fisherman named Pizzomunno. Although the local girls all vied desperately for his attention, Pizzomunno had eyes only for the sea and his beautiful Cristalda.

It was not only mortal women who were drawn to the young man, and he drew the attention of the sirens out at sea. Although they tried and tried, they could not tempt Pizzomunno with their songs and he remained faithful to his love. Even when they resorted to threats, Pizzomunno only laughed – he would love Cristalda, and Cristalda only, and even death was powerless to change that.

The sirens vowed to punish him and, one night when Pizzomunno and Cristalda were enjoying each other's company on the beach, they attacked. Cristalda was bound with chains, and the sirens dragged her beneath the waves. Pizzomunno tried to follow but in vain, and in his grief he slowly turned to stone. Watching from her watery prison, Cristalda could not bear it: she in turn transformed into a pillar of pink coral, her tears falling from it like pearls to this very day.

Every 100 years it is said that the couple are reunited and granted one night together on the shore before returning to their imprisoned states once more.

It is said that on 15 August every year the Pizzomunno rock can't be seen, because he is walking with Cristalda on the shore

Illustrations by: Joe McLaren

Urashima Tarō and the Palace of the Dragon King

Time waits for no man

In this Japanese tale, kind-hearted fisherman Urashima rescued a turtle from a group of boys who were tormenting the poor creature. He returned the turtle to the sea, thinking never to see it again as he made his way home. The following day, the very same turtle appeared again to Urashima as he was out in his boat. The turtle thanked Urashima for his kindness, and grew in size before taking him on his back to the palace of the Dragon King of the Sea. Once at their destination there were more surprises to come: the turtle transformed into a beautiful princess. Enchanted, Urashima decided to stay in the underwater realm and marry her.

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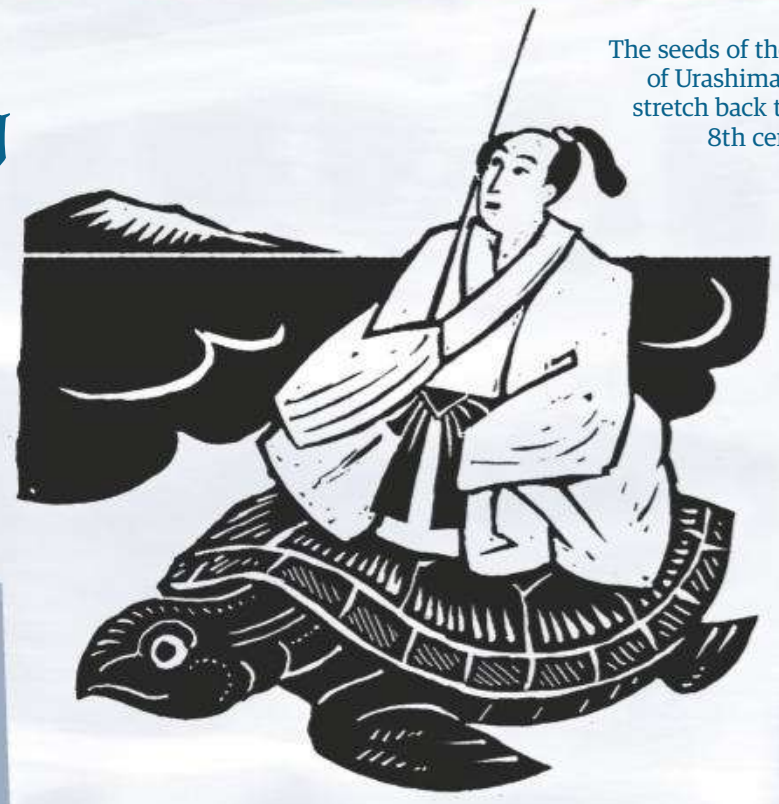


The seeds of the tale of Urashima Tarō stretch back to the 8th century

After a time Urashima found himself missing his family, and voiced his intention to visit them. His bride agreed, giving him a box to take with him, warning that the contents would keep him safe on one condition: he was not to open it. Upon reaching land, Urashima found to his horror that 300 years had passed, his family were dead and his own disappearance had passed into legend. Overcome with grief and unable to return to the sea, Urashima opened the box, only for the lost years to flood over him. He aged 300 years in that moment, before falling down dead.

The lost city of Ys

Drowned by the Devil

The city of Ys was built by King Gradlon for his sea-loving daughter, Dahut. The low-lying city was protected by a great dyke, the gate of which was locked each day without fail to prevent the land from being submerged when the tide came in. Dahut, so the rumours went, was of bad character: her insatiable appetites for drink and men led her to all manner of unmentionable debaucheries. When St Winwaloe took Dahut to task about her behaviour she ignored his sage counsel to mend her wicked ways.

One day, a knight dressed in red caught her eye. This devilish paramour incited Dahut to steal the key for the gate, with terrible consequences. The Devil opened the gate, and the water poured in, flooding the town and everything in it. With people drowning all around them, King Gradlon made for his horse – a magical steed that would see him and his daughter to safety. As they pelted along, however, St Winwaloe once more made an appearance. It was Dahut's fault that this terrible fate had befallen the city, the saint preached, and Gradlon must therefore push his daughter into the raging waves below. The broken king did as he was instructed, sending Dahut to her watery death before escaping to safety, the only survivor.

Where was Ys located? Douarnenez Bay, Brittany, and off the coast of Land's End, Cornwall, are both contenders

Maui and his hook

Never trust a trickster

A familiar figure in the tales of the Pacific, demi-god Maui – clever, mischievous, Maui – was well known for his daring and often disastrous exploits. One of the best known stories involves a fishing trip with his many brothers. They had always refused to take Maui with them before, his tendency to play tricks and the fact he was their mother's favourite prejudicing the brothers against him. But one day the siblings finally agreed to allow Maui to join their outing.

The group set out in their canoes, Maui sporting his signature hook. Determined to prove his worth, Maui baited his hook with a bird and waited. Before long, he felt a tug. The fish was too large to pull up alone, however, and he called his brothers for help. But Maui was up to his old tricks: without his brothers noticing, he had hooked the land beneath the water and was busy pulling it up as he went. He told his brothers not to look back as the canoe carried on its way, but one brother couldn't resist. As he did so, the line snapped, as did the land Maui was pulling up – gone was the smooth landmass, instead leaving a broken chain of islands – known today as Hawaii.

Tales of Maui can be found across thousands of miles, from the Tahitian Islands to Hawaii to New Zealand.

© Alamy

A statue of the Lady of Stavoren can be seen in the harbour today

The Lady of Stavoren

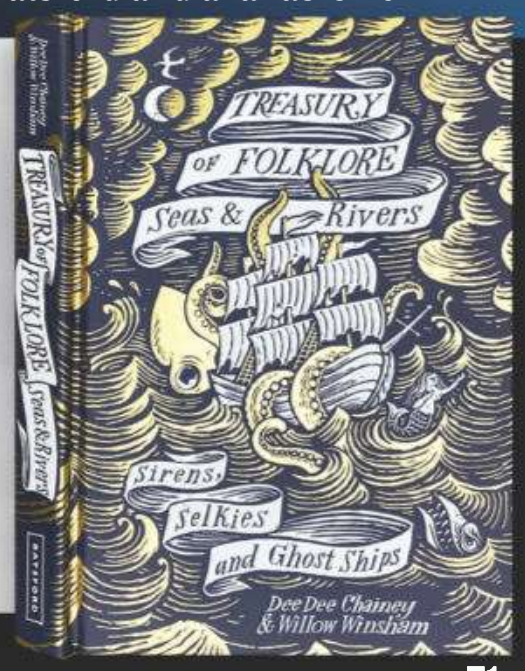
Pride comes before a fall

This tale explains the presence of a large sandbar in the harbour outside Stavoren in the Netherlands, which led to the decline in the city's fortunes during the Middle Ages as ships could no longer reach the city.

A wealthy merchant woman lived in Stavoren; greedy and ill-tempered, she held the fate of the city in her hands. The lady sent her best captain on a quest: to bring back the greatest treasure in the world. On his return she was greatly angered – instead of presenting her with gold or jewels, the captain gave her a ship full of grain. Incensed, the women had the grain dumped into the sea, ignoring the pleas of the town's hungry people, who begged for some to feed their families. Warned that her fortunes could be reversed at any time, the woman haughtily declared that this was impossible. Casting a ring from her finger into the water, she pronounced that she would never grow poor – unless the ring returned to her.

Of course, she did come across the ring once more: revealed in the stomach of a fish at a banquet she held soon after. The city's fortunes dissolved along with her own, the harbour blocked by the sandbar on which the discarded and useless wheat was the only thing to prosper.

Treasury of Folklore: Seas & Rivers
by Willow Winsham and Dee Dee Chainey is published by Batsford and available now



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OSWALD MOSLEY AND THE RISE OF BRITISH FASCISM

An opportunist politician, his violent supporters and the people who rose up against them

Written by Jonathan Gordon

Thousands of men and women were gathered on the streets of London on 4 October 1936. They were textile workers, dockers, community leaders, socialists, communists, local Jewish residents and everything between. In front of them were the Metropolitan Police and behind them members of the British Union of Fascists (BUF), the party of Sir Oswald Mosley, who had planned to march through the streets of East London only to find their route barricaded. "M-O-S-L-E-Y, we want Mosley," chanted his black-shirt wearing followers. "So do we, dead or alive," came the retort of the assembled protestors.

This was the stage for what would come to be known as the Battle of Cable Street, an iconic clash between fascists and the residents of East London who had been tormented and provoked by the group for the last four years. While this would not mark the end of fascism in Britain, it has come to be seen as a final nail in the coffin of public opinion for the BUF and for Mosley who for so many years had been a popular, if eccentric, public figure.

To the manor born

Oswald Ernald Mosley was born on 16 November 1896 to Sir Oswald Mosley, 5th Baronet and Katharine Maud Edwards-Heathcote. After his parents split, he was raised by his mother and lived with his grandparents in the stately Apedale Hall for many years. In January 1914 he attended the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, but was expelled after only a few months for getting involved in a violent altercation over a polo defeat to a rival Aldershot academy. Still, he was commissioned to the 16th The Queen's Lancers during World War I and spent time in the trenches. His experience in the war would lead to a continued anti-war stance in his politics for many years to come.

After the war he decided on a career in politics. In December 1918 he stood for election as a member of the Conservative Party in the district of Harrow, London, quickly gaining attention for his charismatic and powerful oratory as well as his colourful social life and womanising. Aged just 22 when he won, he was the youngest person to take a seat in the House of Commons. But while he represented the Tories in this election, it became clear Mosley had no firm political loyalties, even challenging future prime minister Neville Chamberlain for a seat in Birmingham as an independent in 1924.

Having lost that election he switched sides completely and ran for Labour in 1926, taking the seat of Smethwick. He was appointed to the cabinet of Ramsay MacDonald's Labour Government in 1929 as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (a title for a minister without portfolio) where he was tasked with tackling the unemployment crisis after the Great Depression.

The resultant *Mosley Memorandum* called for a move away from free trade to more protectionist economic policy. An executive council, something similar to a war cabinet but for peace time, was also proposed to tackle the emergency. The proposals were rejected as too pessimistic about Britain's economic prospects and too authoritarian. His ideas had some support, though, and he was praised for his bravery as he quit the government in response to this rejection in 1930.

in April 1931 they were soundly beaten. Worse still, Mosley's former Labour colleagues accused him of splitting the vote, allowing the Conservatives to win. The following October saw a General Election and a coalition government between Labour and the Conservatives, leaving Mosley with little hope of chipping away support from either party. The energy with which Mosley had left the government was in danger of slipping away when an invitation to Italy by

ABOVE It's been estimated that about 25 percent of the BUF membership were women, who had their own Women's Section within the party

"AGED JUST 22, HE WAS THE YOUNGEST PERSON TO TAKE A SEAT IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS"

Fascism in Britain

Mosley spent the next couple of years trying to define his political agenda, but he didn't immediately jump to fascism. First he formed the New Party on 28 February 1931. With the support of several Labour members and his wife Lady Cynthia Curzon, daughter of the 1st Earl Curzon of Kedleston, this new group sought support from across party lines based purely on its economic policies and government restructuring.

However, when they ran a candidate in a by-election for Ashton-under-Lyne

Benito Mussolini set an entirely new course for him.

Mussolini's fascists had been in power since 1922 and the impact of this new political force had been seen across Europe in various guises. Britain was not entirely immune to this disturbing trend, although it had failed to gain much ground. The first of the fascist groups in Britain was the British Fascisti in 1923 organised by Rotha Linton-Orman. Splinter groups such as National Fascisti in 1924 and the Imperial Fascist League in 1929 emerged, but these were fringe organisations (numbering in the dozens). Mosley would soon change all of that.

MOSLEY'S WOMEN

The BUF had a strong female following

DIANA MITFORD

The third of six Mitford sisters was married to Bryan Guinness, heir to the brewing company of the same name, when she began an affair with Mosley. She divorced her husband and began appearing alongside Mosley in public soon after, eventually marrying him secretly at the home of Joseph Goebbels in Berlin in 1936. Hitler attended the wedding.

UNITY MITFORD

Unity joined the BUF along with her sister Diana in 1933. The pair travelled to Germany and Unity aggressively pursued a chance to meet Hitler. When she did finally become acquainted with the Führer, they apparently built a close friendship. She attempted suicide in 1939, and though she survived she never fully recovered and died in 1948.

MARY RICHARDSON

Born in England and raised in Canada, Richardson had joined what she called "a Holy Crusade" of the women's suffrage movement in 1910. She was arrested nine times and served time in Holloway Prison for attacking a police officer. She joined Mosley's BUF in 1932, seeing some of the same commitment to action she had found in the militant suffragettes.

MARY SOPHIA ALLEN

Allen had been one of Britain's first female police officers. Prior to this she'd been in the Women's Political and Social Union and had been arrested numerous times for her part in their protests. She claimed she joined the BUF for its anti-war stance, but was a regular visitor to Germany and supporter of Franco in Spain.

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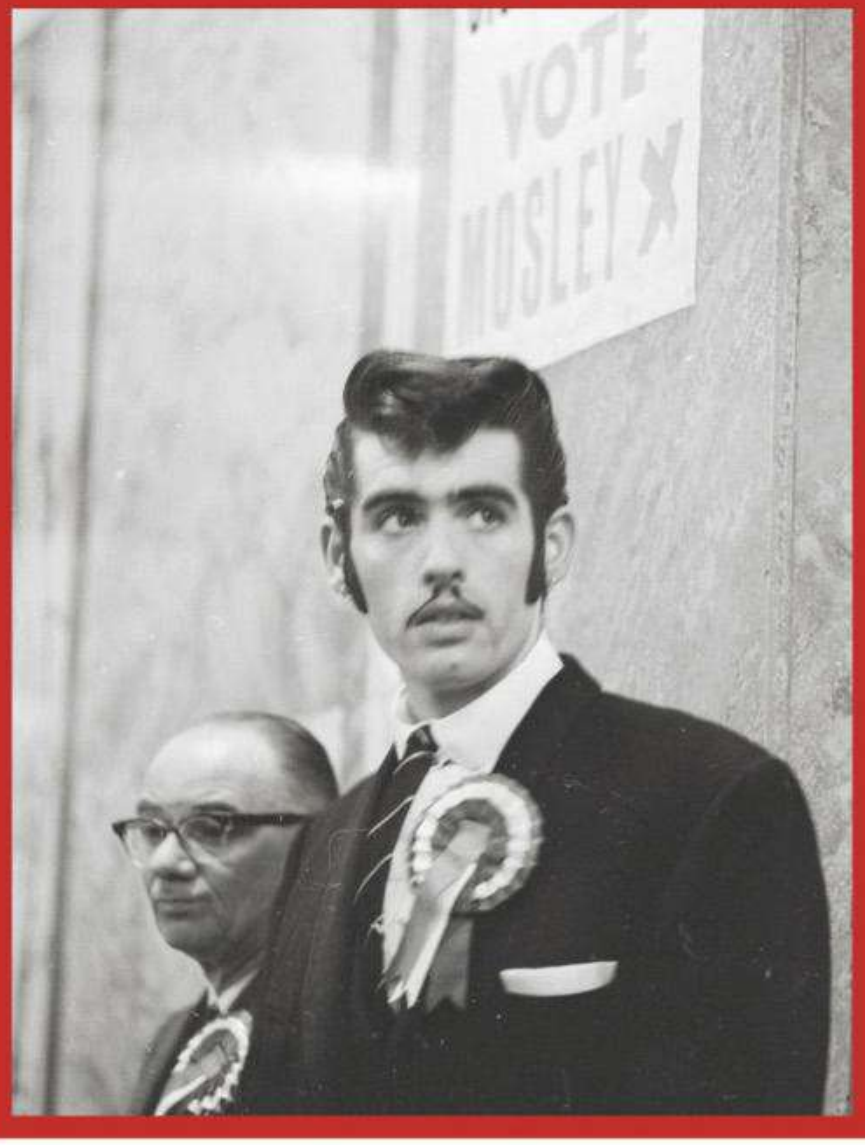


TOP Mosley and his first wife, Lady Curzon, pictured around the time of his election to the House of Commons in 1918

ABOVE-RIGHT Mosley (centre) pictured with some of his Blackshirts in 1935

ABOVE Mosley was especially keen to attract young supporters to his movement such as this BUF member

Forming The BUF

The trip to meet Mussolini in January 1932 appears to have been revealing for Mosley. Both men disdained traditional government structures, appreciated military discipline and wanted to mobilise a younger generation to create change. Seeing what Mussolini had achieved in Italy, Mosley finally seems to have embraced authoritarianism outright.

He made his appreciation for fascism clear on his return to Britain and began to draw up his idea of a British version of it, much to the alarm of his New Party colleagues, including his wife, who did not share his affinity for this new political ideology. His constant affairs did not help the relationship, and Lady Curzon died in 1933 after surgery for peritonitis.

Those who had supported Mosley among the establishment began to abandon him, even before he founded the BUF in October 1932. The party was launched alongside a manifesto entitled *The Greater Britain* that laid out Mosley's vision of British fascism, which was largely built on similar economic and political reforms he had advocated as a minister. The key difference was a much more sweeping change to the parliamentary system, with the whole country built around economic and business interests under a single leader. Mosley was betting that growing dissatisfaction with current political institutions would see support for such a revolution of government, much as it had done in Italy and Germany.

The manifesto itself got very little press attention, but Mosley remained a prominent draw for reporters. Between 1933 and 1937 he would average 200 speeches a year. At first his BUF didn't attract too much negative interest from the public, but it was expected. With the New Party he had a small group of men around to keep order during his speeches who became known as the 'Biff Boys'. This concept evolved into the Blackshirts for the BUF. In the years that followed, a training base was established in Chelsea, called the Black House, to train loyal BUF members in martial arts and military discipline. It's believed about 1,000 men lived in the Black House in its time.

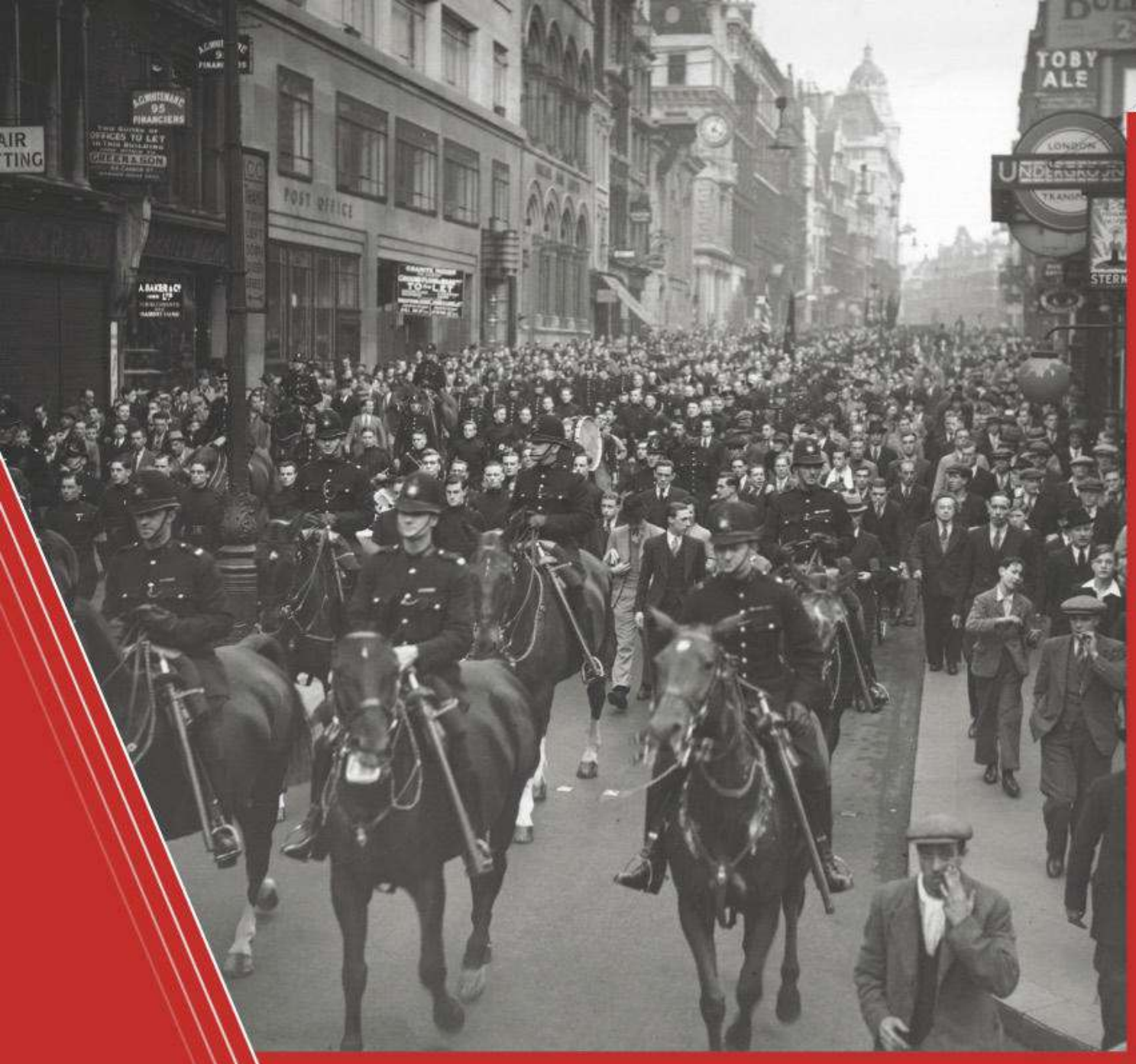
To begin with this force involved strong young men wearing a matching black uniform standing around the stage to offer protection to Mosley and throw out hecklers, which became more and more common as his fascist rhetoric took shape. From early on their motto was, "We never start fights, we only finish them." By 1933, Mosley also started to wear a black shirt for public appearances.

To much of the public, it looked a lot like Mosley was building a paramilitary force and could be planning for revolution. The politician who had once been seen as brave and bold, banging on the walls of an outdated system, was now seen as a potential threat. The growing violence around fascism in Europe, especially the rise of the Nazis in Germany, only raised concerns further.

However, the endorsement of *Daily Mail* owner Lord Rothermere saw the BUF membership leap up. His article in the 8 January 1934 edition of the paper titled, *Hurrah for the Blackshirts!* was followed by membership rising to 40-50,000, with conservative elites and disaffected workers alike drawn to the organisation. But as the party grew, so did the opposition against it.

Olympia

Mosley had not openly endorsed antisemitic policies. In fact he told the *Jewish Chronicle* in January 1933,



5x © Getty Images

"antisemitism forms no part of the policy of this Organisation, and antisemitic propaganda is forbidden". However, that hadn't stopped BUF members from pushing this hateful agenda of their own accord. The Blackshirts were becoming notorious for provoking altercations with inflammatory propaganda and rhetoric in Jewish communities, such as Stepney in East London.

Having embraced fascism, the BUF was instantly opposed by socialists and communists who began to organise against them, leading to clashes at

"TO MUCH OF THE PUBLIC, IT LOOKED A LOT LIKE MOSLEY WAS BUILDING A PARAMILITARY FORCE"

speeches and in the streets among newspaper sellers. While the Blackshirts were officially forbidden from carrying weapons in their role of keeping order at events, they were frequently reported using street fighting weapons such as knuckle dusters. Mosley publicly defended the increasing violence at his rallies as being in defence of free speech.

This all came to a head on 7 June 1934 when the BUF held a rally at Olympia, a massive event space in West Kensington, London. The event was intended as a show of strength, although Mosley still seems to have believed in achieving his goals through electoral politics, much as Hitler had just done in Germany.

15,000 people filled the huge hall, cheering and giving the Roman salute of fascist movements around Europe as Mosley took the stage. But they were not the only people represented in the room. As early as 25 May anti-fascist groups had been planning to infiltrate and disrupt the rally, taking up tickets through their unions and posing as BUF members to get in. They spread themselves through the crowd and interrupted with heckling throughout, one picking up when another was dragged out and beaten by Blackshirts.

The protest lasted an hour as 30 people were gradually ejected from the hall. The unrestrained violence that the Blackshirts inflicted on these protestors was witnessed and reported by the gathered press. While Mosley claimed these agitators were trying to silence free speech, the papers seemed to agree that even if that was the case, the violent response was excessive. Three weeks later the Night of Long Knives took place in Germany as the Nazis purged their political rivals, and the two events became tied together for many. In July Lord Rothermere withdrew his support for the BUF, leaving them more isolated and resulting in an exodus of supporters.

ABOVE-LEFT The BUF march through the streets of London on 4 October 1936

TOP-RIGHT Mosley seemed to resist fascism as a movement at first, but was convinced after visiting Mussolini in Italy

ABOVE-RIGHT Mosley embraced all of the trappings of fascism seen in Italy and Germany

The Battle of Cable Street

As mentioned, up to this point Mosley had avoided outright antisemitism, but that was not true of his supporters, many of whom had joined the BUF because of an affinity with the more overtly antisemitic rhetoric of Hitler. William Joyce, for instance, was a virulent antisemite and was made propaganda director by Mosley in 1934. He would go on to become a WWII English-language Nazi propogandist under the name Lord Haw-Haw.

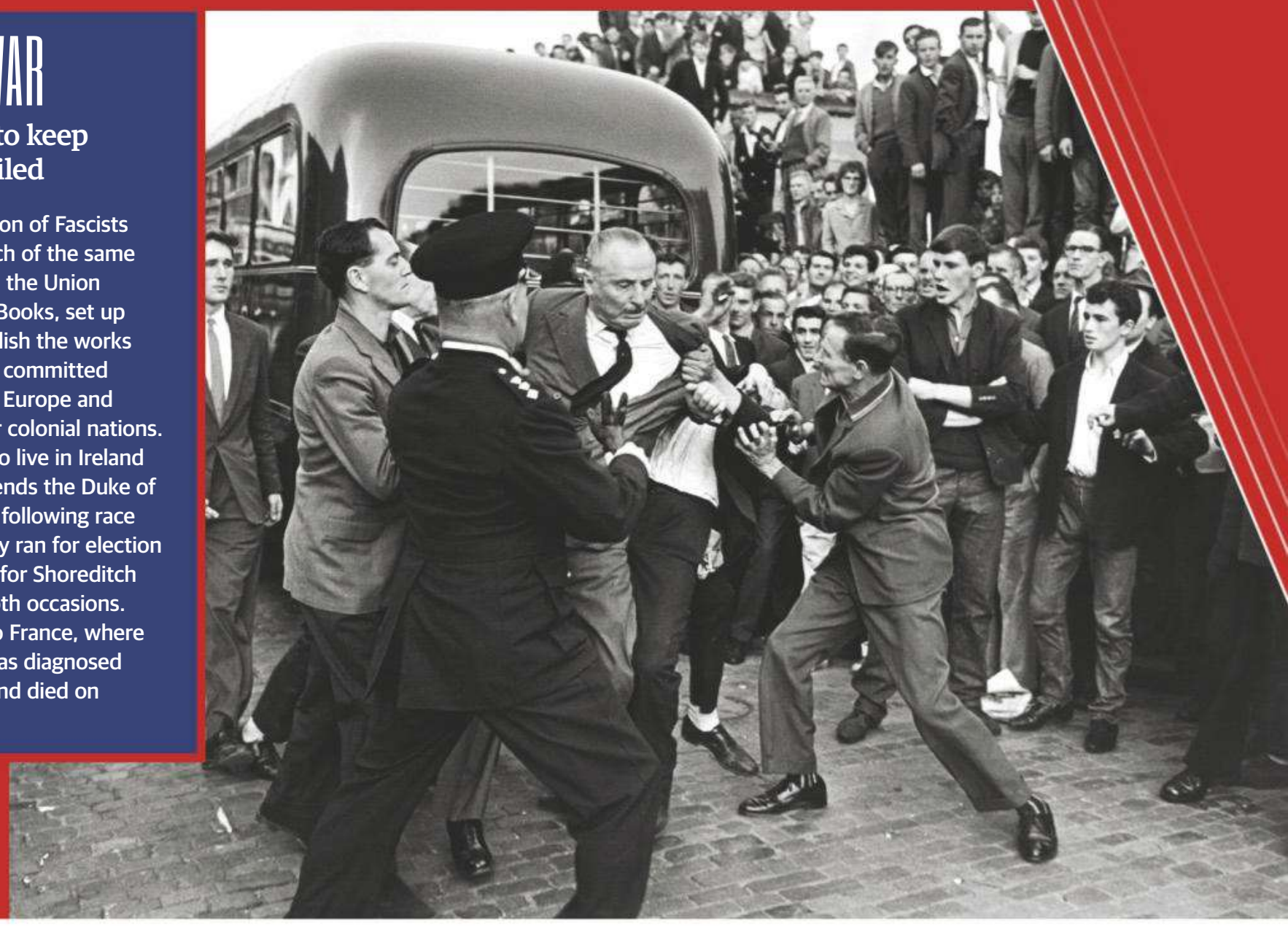
The role of organised Jewish opposition to the BUF became the new enemy for Mosley to rail against, saying on 28 October 1934 in his first reference to Jews in a public speech: "The Jews more than any other single force in this country are carrying on a violent propaganda against us." The leash was now off the antisemitic wing of the party with activities in Jewish communities, especially London, building up to what has become known as the Battle of Cable Street.

The BUF had planned to mark its fourth anniversary with a march through East London on 4 October 1936. After years

AFTER THE WAR

Mosley's attempts to keep fascism alive failed

Mosley abandoned the British Union of Fascists after the war, but still pushed much of the same agenda with his new organisation, the Union Movement. Alongside Euphorion Books, set up with his wife Diana Mosley to publish the works of right-wing authors, Mosley was committed to closer ties between Britain and Europe and stopping immigration from former colonial nations. The Mosleys left England in 1951 to live in Ireland and then France, close to their friends the Duke of Windsor and Wallis Simpson. Still, following race riots in Notting Hill in 1958, Mosley ran for election for Kensington North in 1959 and for Shoreditch & Finsbury in 1966, but lost on both occasions. After this final defeat he retired to France, where he wrote his autobiography. He was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease in 1977 and died on 3 December 1980 in Paris.



RIGHT Mosley's attempts to make public appearances after the war were often met with violent resistance and arrests, such as here in Dalston in 1963

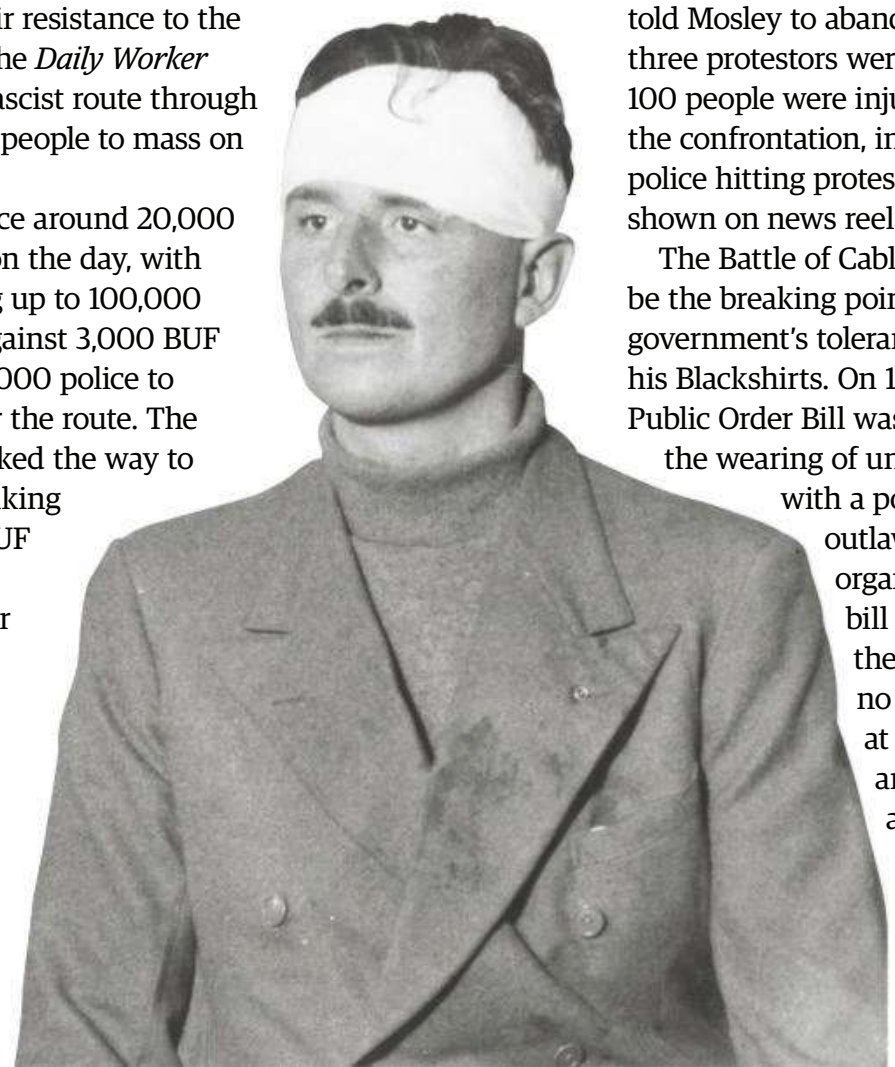
of violent and provocative action in this part of London, where an estimated 183,000 Jewish people resided by the 1930s, the plan was clearly meant to incite a reaction. Despite concerns being raised to the Home Office the march was permitted, so the people of London took matters into their own hands.

While some community leaders called for people to stay off the streets, unions and other community groups joined together to form the Jewish People's Council against Fascism and antisemitism (JPC) and planned their resistance to the march. On 3 October the *Daily Worker* printed a map of the fascist route through London and called for people to mass on key streets.

Lower estimates place around 20,000 protestors in London on the day, with higher estimates going up to 100,000 or even 250,000 up against 3,000 BUF members and some 6,000 police to protect them and clear the route. The anti-fascist crowd blocked the way to Whitechapel Road, making it impossible for the BUF to march as planned, so the police looked for an alternative route to clear. They headed to Cable Street.

However, the JPC had planned for this with three barricades (including an upturned lorry) blocking the road. Irish dock workers had even ripped up paving stones to add to the blockade, an act of solidarity in return for Jewish support in their 1912 dock strikes that was still well remembered.

BELOW Mosley pictured in 1937 having received a blow to the head while giving a speech in Liverpool



When police came to clear a path they were assailed by missiles from the ground and surrounding windows above. As violence between police and protestors carried on, it became clear the fascists would not be able to pass and Commissioner of Police Sir Philip Game told Mosley to abandon the event. Eighty-three protestors were arrested and nearly 100 people were injured with footage of the confrontation, including mounted police hitting protestors with batons, being shown on news reels.

The Battle of Cable Street proved to be the breaking point for the British government's tolerance of Mosley and his Blackshirts. On 1 January 1937 the Public Order Bill was enacted banning the wearing of uniforms in association with a political movement and outlawing quasi-military organisations. With the bill so clearly targeting the BUF, there could be no doubt to the public at large that Mosley and his group were a menace to be feared and distrusted.

Decline and fall

With the Blackshirts outlawed Mosley could no longer police his speeches and the local police forces were not as willing to resort to violence against hecklers. This made rallies and speeches even more challenging, reducing opportunities to spread his message. Growing tension between Britain and Germany saw national distaste for fascism increase too. Public appearances in Germany by BUF members, including Mosley's second wife Diana Mitford, didn't help matters.

When war was declared between the United Kingdom and Germany on 3 September 1939, fascism in Britain was a dead concept. Mosley's support for Hitler made him an enemy of the state and a threat to the nation. He was interned by the government in 1940, although he was released due to ill health in 1943. When he was released a poll revealed that 87 percent of the British public thought he should have remained in prison.

While the war would not be the end of Mosley as a public figure, he would never reach the heights of popularity he enjoyed in the early 1930s. It was not an impossibility for fascism to take hold in Britain and Mosley might have been the only political figure capable of carrying it off, but the violence and hatred that surrounded it, as well as its connection to foreign interests, scuppered its chances.

DID THE ROMANS WEAR UNDERWEAR?

(AND OTHER IMPORTANT ANCIENT HISTORY QUESTIONS ANSWERED)

Written by Callum McKelvie

Have you ever wondered whether the Romans wore pants? If there were pets in the ancient world? If people believed in ghosts or aliens? From Cleopatra to the Colosseum, from Augustus Caesar to Alexandria, many ancient histories tend to focus on people and events that remain popular due to films, television and video games. Yet this approach can mean that the details of daily life often go unnoticed.

Enter historian Garrett Ryan, who has made it his mission to answer the niche and obscure questions surrounding Ancient Greece and Rome by heading online and offering his expertise to public forums like Reddit. We spoke to him about his new book *Naked Statues, Fat Gladiators, And War Elephants* which, through a series of short and humorous essays, seeks to answer these questions and many more.

Can you tell us a little about yourself and your interest in the ancient world?

For as long as I can remember, I've been interested in history, and especially in the Ancient Greeks and Romans. This eventually led me to earn a PhD in Greek and Roman history at the University of Michigan. After teaching at a few universities, I left academia to start toldinstone.com, a website that explores ancient history. While promoting my site, I discovered online history forums – especially AskHistorians on Reddit – where tens of thousands of people were asking questions about the Greeks and Romans. I became active on these sites, and began to think about writing a book that would answer some of the most frequently asked questions in a way that was both informative and humorous. The end result was *Naked Statues, Fat Gladiators, And War Elephants*.

What is the most common question about the Greeks and Romans you see asked online?

There's no single question, but certain topics come up again and again. I see a lot of questions about the classical world's most famous figures – Cleopatra, Caesar, Alexander the Great. Other favourite topics include the fall of the Roman Empire, the Roman army and gladiators. In general, most people know Ancient Greece and Rome through mass media – movies, television, video games – and their questions reflect that.

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Have you ever been stumped by a question? And if so, can you tell us what it was?

I'm stumped routinely, and that's half the fun! When you aren't sure about a topic you have to dive into the sources, and frequently end up discovering things you never suspected. Once, for example, a student in a class I was teaching at the University of Michigan asked me whether the tomb of any Roman emperor or empress had ever been discovered intact. With all the confidence of a newly minted PhD, I answered: "No, they were looted in the Middle Ages." But later I began to doubt my answer, did some reading, and discovered that the tombs of two Roman empresses had been uncovered during the demolition of old St Peter's in the Renaissance. The question about imperial tombs was eventually included in my book.

In your experience, what do people find the most surprising about the ancient world?

We know the Greeks and Romans – or at least we like to think we do – in a way we know no other ancient civilisation. This leads to all sorts of misconceptions. People who are familiar with Classical history primarily through movies or video games, for example, often imagine the Greeks and Romans in lurid colours – all bloodshed and debauchery, impossible virtue and improbable vice. That is misleading, of course. The Greeks and Romans, after all, were just people, not all that different from us in the basic concerns of making a living or raising a family. But it is equally misleading to think that the Greeks and Romans were just like us. For most of us, it's hard to even imagine living in a world in which virtually every meal consists of bread or porridge, life expectancy hovers in the twenties, and slavery is a casually accepted fact. Yet that was the world in which the Greeks and Romans lived.

Why do you think that aspects of daily life and many of the other topics covered in your book seldom appear in popular histories?

While there's always demand for another biography of Caesar or Cleopatra, it can be hard to convince a publisher that the public is clamouring to learn more about some niche topic like ancient barbers or birth control. There are, of course, books that cover daily life in antiquity, but most of these are either academic monographs or student handbooks. What sets my book apart, for better or worse, is its variety. To the best of my knowledge, no other book on ancient history tries to meet popular interest by addressing questions on a wide range of topics, familiar and otherwise.

ABOVE Just how were elephants used in battle?

BELOW Why do so many Roman statues feel the need to flash their audience?

2x © Getty Images

Is there anything you've discovered when answering questions that surprised you?

All sorts of things. To give just one instance, the first question in my book is: "Why didn't the Greeks or Romans wear pants?" While researching the answer I discovered – among many other things – that the Athenians often kept small coins in their mouths (since their clothes didn't have pockets), that pants were repeatedly outlawed in the city of Rome, and that Caligula liked to dress up as Zeus at parties.

We'd hate to spoil the book's surprises, but did the Greeks or Romans wear underwear?

As far as we can tell, not often, at least not in the modern sense. Women wore breast bands (a sort of proto-bra), but otherwise there's almost no evidence for people wearing what we would consider underwear. The Greeks and Romans generally preferred light under-tunics.

Have you ever been asked a question that particularly amused you?

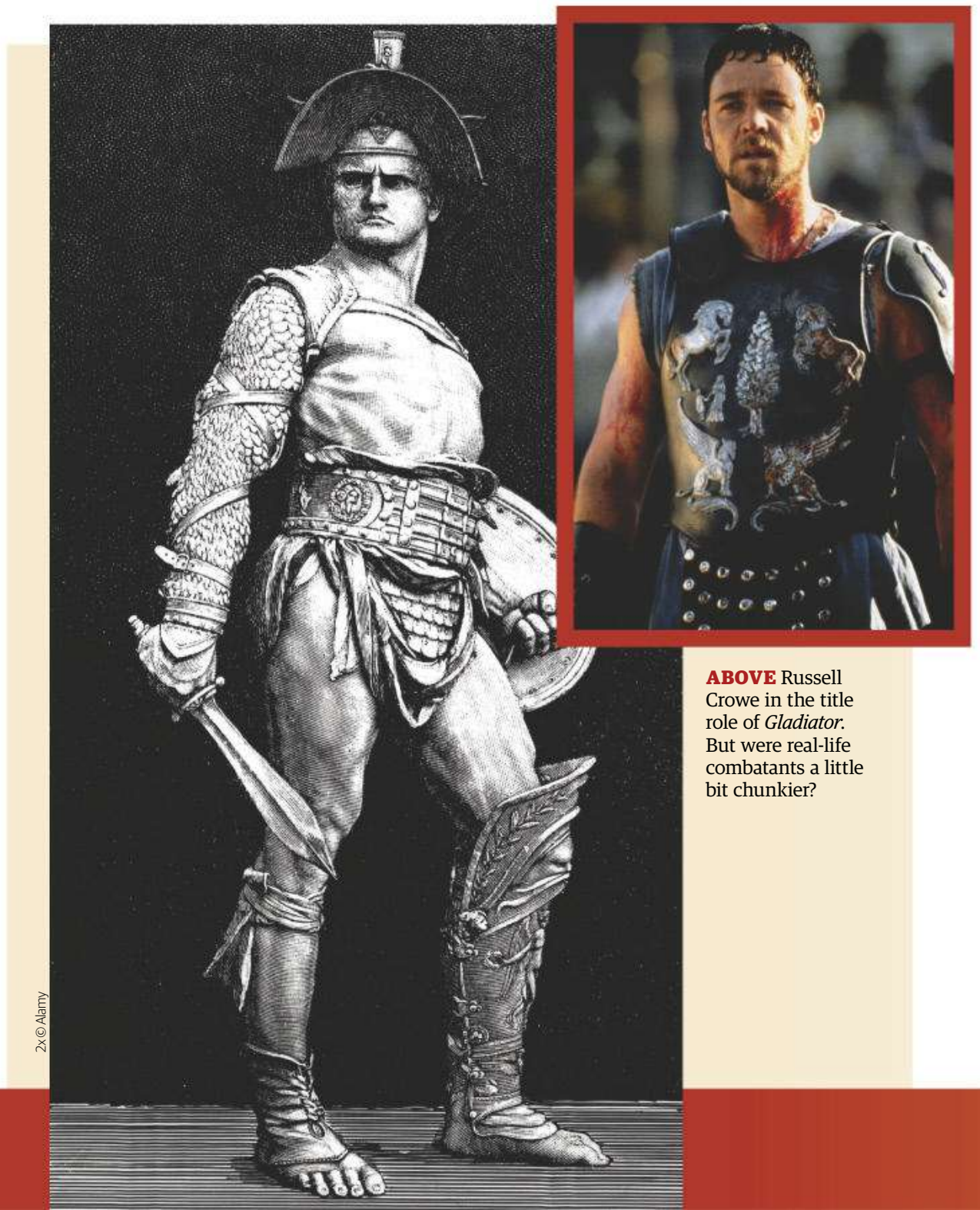
Two spring to mind. The first one was: "Did anyone ever streak in the Colosseum?" The answer, unfortunately, is no. Or at least no written source mentions it, and it would have been very difficult. The arena of the Colosseum was separated from the first row of seats by a steep drop and an elaborate fence. Archers were stationed along the barrier to maintain order in the arena, so even if someone managed to scramble over the fence he would have been pincushioned with arrows before he got far. The other question that made me laugh was: "Were aqueducts ever used as water slides?" Here again, though we have no textual evidence one way or the other, the answer is almost certainly no. Almost all Roman aqueducts have a very slight gradient – sometimes only a few inches per mile – so any attempt to slide inside one would have only produced bruises.

The title of your book – Naked Statues, Fat Gladiators, And War Elephants – is intriguing, to say the least. Can you tell us a little about where it came from?

It catches the eye, doesn't it? The title refers to three questions in the book: "Why were so many Greek and Roman statues naked?", "Were gladiators fat?" and "How were war elephants used in battle?" (In case you're wondering, the short answers to those questions are "artistic convention", "not really" and "very carefully".)

Could you tell us more about these fat gladiators?

About 15 years ago, archaeologists working at Ephesus in Turkey discovered a gladiator cemetery. The bones were analysed by forensic anthropologists, who announced that gladiators had lived on a fattening vegetarian diet. We already knew this from textual sources – the Romans used to call gladiators "barley boys" because they lived on bean and barley gruel – but the Ephesian team were the first to suggest that the gladiators' diet was intended to fatten them up. Layers of fat, they pointed out, would have helped to protect a gladiator's vital organs. This led to a series of popular articles about fat gladiators. But there's no good evidence that gladiators were actually overweight. They were probably fed beans and barley simply because they were nutritious and cheap. The masters of gladiator schools, after all, didn't want sluggish fighters. Since gladiators trained hard, they would have burned their bean and barley calories pretty efficiently. They may not have been as trim as modern athletes, but to judge from our textual and artistic sources the average gladiator was far from overweight.



ABOVE Russell Crowe in the title role of *Gladiator*. But were real-life combatants a little bit chunkier?

2x © Alamy

"THEY MAY NOT HAVE BEEN AS TRIM AS MODERN ATHLETES, BUT THE AVERAGE GLADIATOR WAS FAR FROM OVERWEIGHT"

Were the answers in your book difficult to research?

For every page I wrote, I probably read three or four hundred. This was time-consuming, particularly since the pandemic limited my access to research libraries. Reading so broadly was a new experience for me. When you earn a PhD in the classics you focus on your thesis topic – in my case, the political dimensions of monumental building in the eastern Roman provinces – to the virtual exclusion of everything else. For this book, on the other hand, I had to research a huge range of topics, which was both fascinating and exhausting.

We imagine that you can't just go into a library and look up something like "did the Romans wear underwear"?

I usually began with a general topic and worked back to the sources. For the underwear question, I started by looking up articles on Greek and Roman clothing in classical dictionaries. I used the bibliographies of these articles to find books on related topics, and then read those books to find the primary sources that actually answered the question.

There's one we've always wanted to know: what were the Romans' drinking habits?

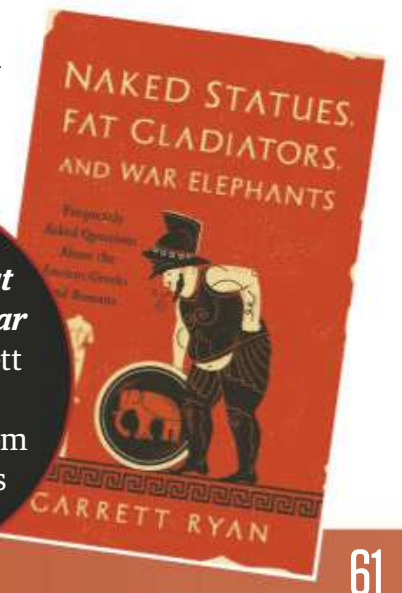
One of the questions in my book is: "How much wine did the Greeks and Romans drink?" So hopefully I can satisfy your thirst for knowledge. Drinking habits varied from person to person, of course, but it's been estimated that the average Roman man drank about a litre of wine per day – roughly one-and-a-third modern bottles. This might sound like a lot, but it was taken with meals and mixed with water, so we shouldn't imagine the Romans staggering about during their daily routines. The really heavy drinking took place at banquets. Tales of debauchery abound. There was one Roman, for example, who was nicknamed tricongius – 'the three gallon guy' – for his ability to drink three Roman gallons of wine (more than ten litres) at a single swig.

Wow... and was this wine as we understand it?

More or less, although it wouldn't have seemed very savoury to us. As I mentioned, wine was almost always mixed with water, and although it was strained before it was poured it still contained plenty of stray seeds and bits of grape skin. And all sorts of things were added to it – from marble dust to perfume and even salt water.

So when can we learn more about these fascinating aspects of the ancient world?

Naked Statues, Fat Gladiators, And War Elephants will be published at the start of September, and is now available for pre-order on Amazon and the Foyles website. In the meantime, I'd encourage readers to visit toldinstone.com, which explores many more aspects of the ancient world.



Naked Statues, Fat Gladiators, And War Elephants by Garrett Ryan is available from 1 Sept 2021 from Prometheus Books

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW CHURCHILL?

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE AND WIN A COPY OF THIS BRAND NEW CHURCHILL BOOK

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He may be one of the most written-about people in British history, but do you know Winston Churchill as well as you think you do? That's the challenge being laid down by *The Churchill Quiz Book*. Written by Kieran Whitworth, book buyer at the Imperial War Museums (IWM) and author of *The Ultimate World War II Quiz Book*, this new release from Osprey Publishing, in association with Imperial War Museums, takes you from the life of young Winston all the way up to his post-war years. We caught up with Whitworth to learn a little about his book.

Why do you think Churchill remains such a compelling historical figure?

Acclaimed by his supporters as a war-leader, national saviour, adventurer, innovator and orator, he is deplored by his detractors as privileged, reckless, heavy-handed, militarist and imperialist. He lived and worked through some of the most tumultuous times, knew many iconic famous people, was a modernist who saw both the advantages and perils of newly developing technologies, and was a family man and devoted husband who did indeed deliver Britain and her empire through its then greatest crisis, the Second World War.

Did you learn anything new about Churchill during the writing process for this book?

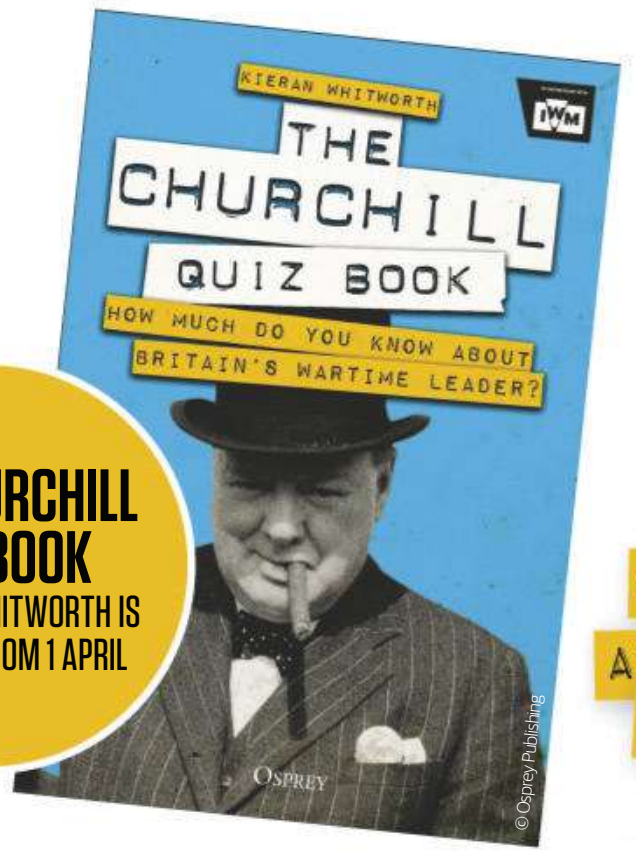
When researching questions for the book and delving further into the latest biographies on him, I was struck by just how extraordinary and adventurous a life he really had led. I was amazed by his sheer energy and by his enquiring mind, and how mischievous and witty he was. I tried to coin a phrase that encompassed everything I had learnt about him while compiling the quiz book, and ended up calling him an 'anti-establishment, establishment figure'!

What do you think is the biggest misconception that people have about Churchill?

I think there are so many myths and misconceptions about him, and these can also alter depending on your views. His power as an orator is widely known, but I hadn't realised that the man responsible for some of the most iconic speeches in history, especially during the war, actually changed his oratory style from when he was a politician earlier in his career to when he was giving those wartime speeches. He wanted to sound more modern in his style, even with his stammer and lisp. You hear the wartime speeches and believe he had always delivered his speeches that way!

What do you hope people will take away from your new book?

I hope readers can learn more about Churchill without having to read long books! If it becomes a gateway for people to want to read more about him then that is great, but many people like to learn their history in more bite-sized chunks, so the quiz format works really well, although encapsulating a lot of historical information and context into short questions and answers is not always easy. Also, despite the numerous books about him, working as book buyer at IWM I'm not aware of their having ever been a quiz book devoted to him, and surely someone who lived such an extraordinary life deserves that accolade?



THE CHURCHILL QUIZ BOOK
BY KIERAN WHITWORTH IS AVAILABLE FROM 1 APRIL

WIN!

COPIES OF THE CHURCHILL QUIZ BOOK UP FOR GRABS

WHAT WAS THE NICKNAME GIVEN TO THE STOCKY, RED-HAIRED WINSTON CHURCHILL AT SCHOOL?

A. Copperbeech
B. Copperchub
C. Copperknob

WHAT DID CHURCHILL BEGIN WRITING IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE END OF WORLD WAR I, AND WHOSE VOLUMES WERE PUBLISHED BETWEEN 1923 AND 1931?

A. The Great Cataclysm
B. The World in Flames
C. The World Crisis

WHAT NICKNAME WAS GIVEN TO THE ZIGZAG IN A MIDDLE EASTERN BORDER, SAID TO HAVE BEEN DRAWN BY CHURCHILL AFTER A LONG 'LIQUID' LUNCH IN 1921?

A. Churchill's Hand
B. Churchill's Burp
C. Churchill's Hiccup

WHAT DID CHURCHILL HAVE INSTALLED BY CAPTAIN PIM AT THE NUMBER 10 ANNEXE IN 1940?

A. A large bar
B. A map room
C. A large bath

WHAT IS CHURCHILL SAID TO HAVE DONE IN MARCH 1945, WHILE VISITING THE GERMAN SIEGFRIED LINE?

A. Chalked his name on it
B. Had a piece of barbed wire removed to put on display at Blenheim
C. Urinated on it

GIVE US YOUR ANSWERS AND ENTER THE DRAW AT: BIT.LY/AAHCHURCHILL

The Union screw sloop USS Hartford, lead ship of her class, battles her way past Fort Jackson as it presses up the Mississippi River, 24 April 1862

Greatest Battles

BATTLE OF NEW ORLEANS

FORTS JACKSON AND ST PHILIP, LOUISIANA, 18-24 APRIL 1862

Written by Marc DeSantis

Stretching some 3,734km north to south, both sides of the American Civil War recognised the Mississippi River's strategic importance. The war for the Mississippi would be one of not just riverine naval forces but also of fortifications and gun batteries situated on its banks.

US Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles approved the formation of a gunboat force to fight for control of the river. As an inland waterway, the US Army claimed jurisdiction over the Mississippi and the many other rivers that fed into it, but the navy sent experienced officers to command the boats and whip them into fighting shape.

The weakest point of the Union naval blockade lay at the Mississippi's mouth as it empties into the Gulf of Mexico. At New Orleans, the river split into four separate channels and here the rebels

© Getty Images

had their main defensive fortifications: Fort Jackson, on the western bank, and Fort St Philip, on the eastern bank.

Despite New Orleans' strategic location, Jefferson Davis, president of the Confederacy, had not seen fit to do much to defend the city itself. The bulk of the city's defences were oriented to the north – the direction in which any Union offensive was expected to come, leaving it vulnerable to an attack from the south. While Forts Jackson and St Philip were themselves substantial, if a Union fleet could actually find a way past them New Orleans would be unable to repel a Federal assault.

The Northern plan for seizing New Orleans was the making of 48-year-old Commander David Dixon Porter of the US Navy. Porter's plan called for a bombardment of Forts Jackson and St Philip by a flotilla of 21 schooners carrying 13-inch mortars, which could loft explosive shells on high trajectories. Other warships would then make the run past the forts and head up to New Orleans. The ensuing occupation of the city would be undertaken by soldiers from the US Army.

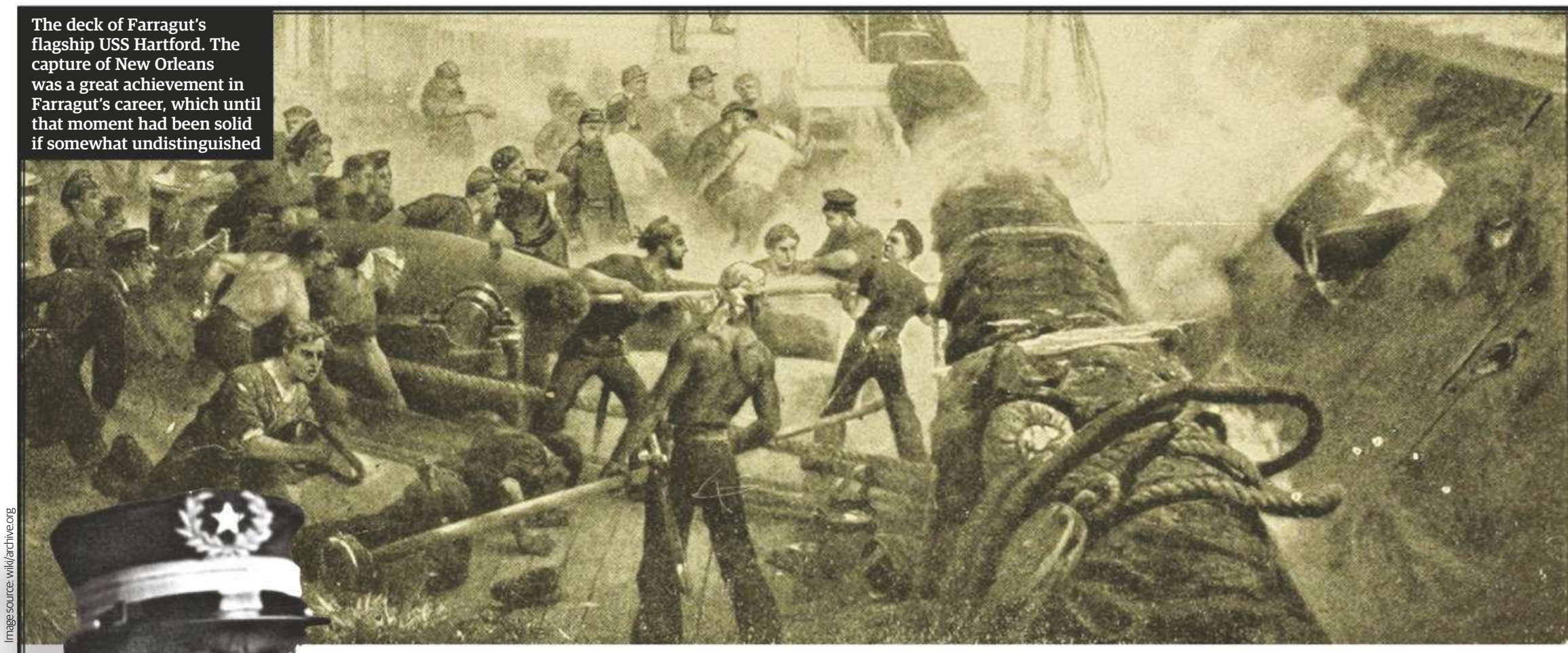
ENTER DAVID FARRAGUT

With the plan of attack against New Orleans settled, the matter of who would lead the expedition now loomed. Porter suggested his own foster-brother, Flag Officer David Glasgow Farragut, for the command. Farragut was a Southerner, but he had scorned the secession and had remained loyal to the United States. Farragut thought the attack could work and was ready to lead it himself. He was soon given command of the expedition.

The Union's Gulf Blockading Squadron was divided in two. The East Gulf Blockading Squadron took oversight of the coastline stretching from Cape Canaveral on Florida's east coast, round the southern tip of Florida, and up to St Andrew Bay. From St Andrew westward to the mouth of the Rio Grande in Texas Farragut, aboard his flagship the USS Hartford, would have the command of the West Gulf Blockading Squadron. To keep the true target of his operation secret, rumours were deliberately put out that it was headed for Texas, or to Mobile in Alabama.

CONFEDERATE DISORDER

The Confederate defence of New Orleans was poorly prepared to meet the coming Union attack. The city itself was held by Major General Mansfield Lovell,



The deck of Farragut's flagship USS Hartford. The capture of New Orleans was a great achievement in Farragut's career, which until that moment had been solid if somewhat undistinguished

Image source: wiki/archive.org

Flag Officer David Glasgow Farragut was overall commander of the Union fleet that attacked and captured New Orleans. He became the first admiral of the US Navy

Image source: National Archives

but its more distant defences, such as Forts Jackson and St Philip, were under the command of Major General Johnson Kelly Duncan. The 'fleet' tasked with guarding New Orleans was organisationally unsound. Control of the ships around the city was split between three separate entities. The ironclads CSS Manassas and CSS Louisiana, along with the steam gunboats CSS Jackson and CSS McRae and a few tugboats, were in the hands of the Confederate Navy. However, CSS Governor Moore and CSS General Quitman, both cottonclad rams, were part of the Louisiana State Navy. Six further vessels – Defiance, Warrior, Resolute, General Breckenridge, General Lovell and Stonewall Jackson – were held by the Confederate Army's River Defense Fleet. Neither of the latter two forces would accept orders from the Confederate Navy, thereby complicating the issue of operational control.

ON TO NEW ORLEANS

Farragut arrived at Ship Island in the Gulf of Mexico on 20 February, where he linked up with 18,000 US Army soldiers under the command of Major General Benjamin F Butler. These were the troops that would be tasked with seizing the city. Farragut's fleet was substantial. In addition to Hartford, he had its sister ships USS Brooklyn, USS Pensacol and USS Richmond. These were joined by the steam frigate USS Colorado, the steam corvettes USS Iroquois and USS Oneida, the ancient sidewheeler frigate USS Mississippi and the converted packet steamer USS Varuna. Supplementing these larger units were 11 steam gunboats and a congeries of auxiliary vessels. He was met by Porter with his mortar boat flotilla at Ship Island in early March.

News now came to Farragut that Forts Henry and Donelson were in Union hands. He also knew that the Southerners were building two big ironclads, Louisiana and Mississippi, that would be deadly to the wooden ships in his fleet. It'd be better to move before they were operational.

Beginning on 7 March, getting the ships over the shallows proved a laborious chore and the fleet was not fully across until 8 April. The mortar schooners, led by Porter in Harriet Lane, pushed up the 30km from the Head of Passes to the forts. Starting on 18 April, the mortars began lobbing shells against Fort Jackson and Fort St Philip, with each vessel hurling a 13-inch shell aloft every ten minutes. Their aim was largely accurate, thanks to the skill of the mortar-men. The forts returned fire ineffectually. The Union bombardment continued for ten hours, at the end of which Fort Jackson was ablaze. The pummelling ceased with the coming of night, and then resumed the next morning, but at a reduced rate of one shell every 30 minutes. Porter's ammunition stocks had begun to run low, and he now understood that his original estimate, which had called for 48 hours to reduce both forts, had been wildly optimistic.

In preparation for the general assault, Farragut had every bit of superfluous equipment removed from his ships. Even their masts were reduced so that they could carry only the most limited of sail. His crews daubed their ships' sides with mud to make them less visible in the hours of darkness and their decks were painted white to make their weapons easier to see at night. About the midships they hung heavy anchor chains as a kind of rudimentary 'chain mail' armour to protect the boilers behind them.

Other ships had also arrived to join the fight on the Confederate side. CSS Manassas had come, along with the cottonclad ram CSS Stonewall Jackson. The long-awaited ironclad CSS Louisiana also made its appearance but its engines were non-functional and its guns were not fully operational.

The obstacle of a line of eight dismasted schooner hulks across the Mississippi remained. These were hacked apart by a daring team of Union seamen in three gunboats while under heavy enemy fire. With the line severed, the Confederates towed

Louisiana further downstream, anchoring it closer to Fort St Philip. The forts' commander, General Duncan, asked the Confederate Navy commander, John K Mitchell, to move Louisiana even further south, past the forts to the now-tattered hulk line, where he thought it would be of more use. Mitchell however declined, on the grounds that if he did so, no further work could be carried out on the ship.

The battering from the mortar boats continued for several more days, with no sign that Fort Jackson was about to capitulate. Farragut decided that he would have to chance a run past the forts even though they had not been put out of action. At 2.00am on the morning of 24 April, the mortar barrage slackened and a pair of red lanterns on USS Hartford's mast gleamed, indicating that the Union fleet was to steam onward. The vanguard, Red division, under Captain Theodorus Bailey in the gunboat Cayuga led the slow advance. Behind them came the Blue division of Hartford, Brooklyn and Richmond. Farragut was high above in his flagship's rigging, getting a better look of the unfolding night scene, all the while shouting orders to his sailors below. He came down, after being begged to do so, only just in time to avoid being hit by a Confederate shell. Taking up the rear, in the third division under Chief of Staff Henry Bell, were Iroquois and five gunboats.

Ahead, Cayuga was struck all along its length by shells from Fort St Philip. It pushed on to engage Confederate warships, set afire an enemy vessel and forced it ashore. Cayuga's companions Oneida and Varuna moved forward. An enemy ship crossed Oneida's bow, and with every ounce of speed it could muster, Onieda rammed it, afterwards firing its guns at any enemy in range.

Varuna, on its own, took out four Confederate ships, and was then engaged by the cottonclad Governor Moore of the Louisiana State Navy. Governor Moore approached Varuna from behind and both ships let loose with a hellstorm of fire. The Confederate ram came so close to Varuna that it could not depress its bow gun enough to fire at the Union craft. Frustrated and desperate, its commander, Lieutenant Beverly Kennon, ordered his gun to fire through his own ship's hull at Varuna.

Governor Moore next rammed Varuna, followed by Stonewall Jackson. When Stonewall Jackson backed off to make another ramming attack,

Fire from Fort Jackson strikes the gunboat Iroquois, causing numerous casualties. Despite the mortar attacks on the forts, they were still a threat to the Union ships

Image source: wiki/archive.org

UNION

Image source: wiki/Library of Congress

FLAG OFFICER DAVID GLASGOW FARRAGUT

The first rear admiral, vice admiral and admiral of the US Navy, Farrugat was fostered by naval officer David Porter after his mother's death and served aged only 12 in the war of 1812. He would go on to serve in the Mexican-American War and Civil War.

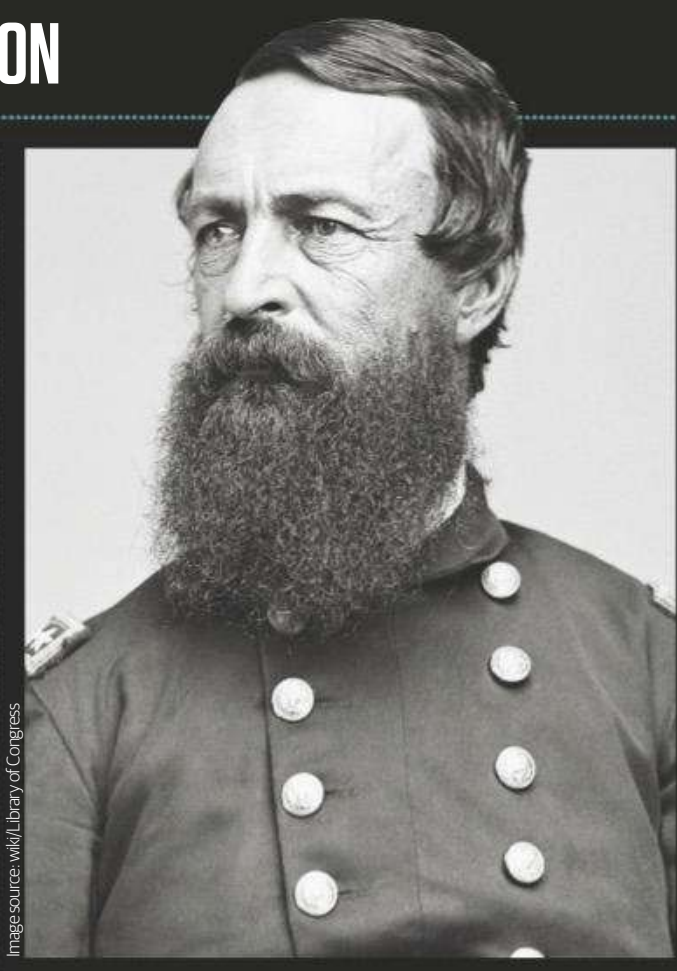


Image source: wiki/Library of Congress

COMMANDER DAVID DIXON PORTER

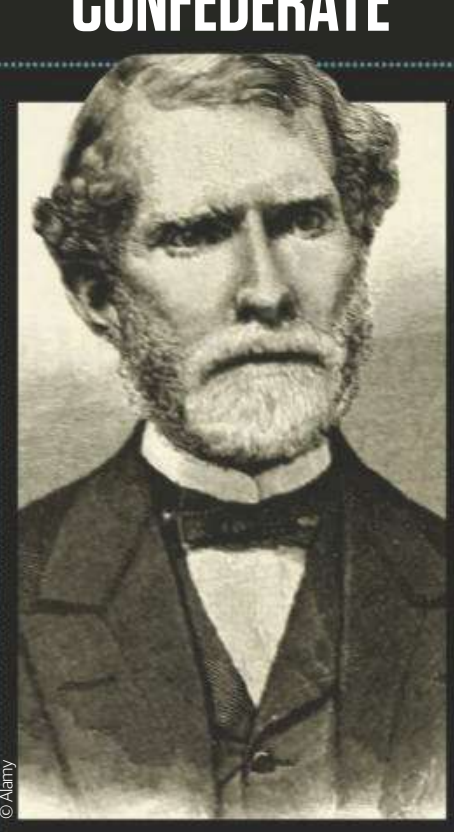
The second ever US Navy admiral after his foster brother Farragut, Porter was part of a family of distinguished navy men, serving with his father from age 10. During the Battle of New Orleans Porter commanded mortar boats that helped clear the path of the fleet on the Mississippi.

CONFEDERATE

Image source: wiki/Library of Congress

MAJOR GENERAL MANSFIELD LOVELL

As the man in charge of the defence of New Orleans for the Confederacy, Lovell was the one who took the blame for not anticipating a naval assault. He was relieved of duty, but a Court of Enquiry spared him a verdict of incompetence. He was given no new assignment in the war.



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COMMANDER JOHN K MITCHELL

While command of Confederate naval forces around New Orleans fell under the auspices of Commander William C Whittle, he passed responsibility of command to his executive officer, Mitchell. Though nominally in charge, some regional fleets refused to take his orders.

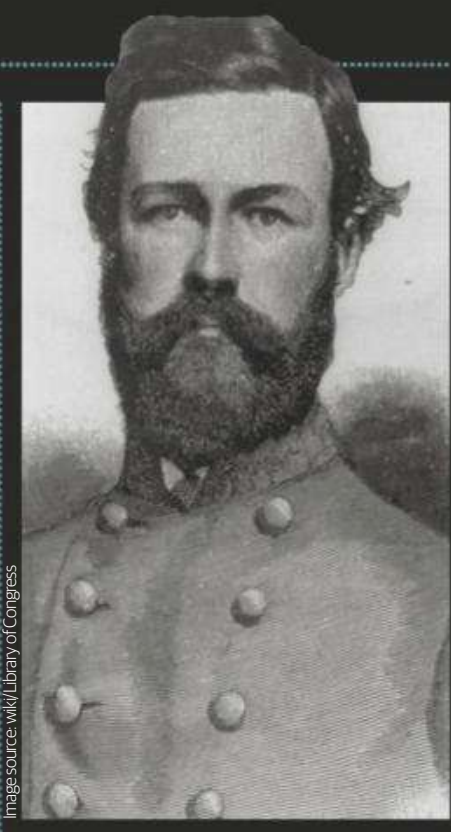


Image source: wiki/Library of Congress

MAJOR GENERAL JOHNSON KELLY DUNCAN

Born in Pennsylvania, Duncan was a rare northerner in the ranks of the Confederate army, joining with the rank of colonel before promotion to brigadier general in January 1862. He was in charge of Forts Jackson and St Philip when they were captured by the Union army.

Varuna used the breathing space to pepper its tormentor with five eight-inch shells, and this pounding forced the Confederate ship ashore in flames. But Varuna was by now also sinking, and its captain brought it to the safety of the riverbank. Governor Moore, in the meantime, was so badly damaged by the fire from other Union warships that it too was forced ashore, and Kennon set Governor Moore ablaze to keep it out of the enemy's hands.

Elsewhere, Pensacola had gotten lost in the darkness and had come perilously close to Fort St Philip before veering off to the western side of the river. The elderly USS Mississippi was behind it, sidewheels pounding. Off the port bow appeared a low silhouette, shaped like a cigar. It was the infamous ram CSS Manassas, under Lieutenant Alexander Warley, come to do battle. He rammed Mississippi, but only inflicted a glancing hit, which nonetheless managed to tear a gaping hole in the old sidewheeler. The Union ship shuddered and began to list, but then quickly righted itself. Manassas headed off to find another victim.

Back with the Blue division, the screw sloop Brooklyn had become entangled in the broken remnants of the hulk line. Brooklyn finally extricated itself, but only after having taken heavy fire from the forts. Once past Fort St Philip, Brooklyn met another enemy. Manassas had reappeared, firing its single cannon at Brooklyn and then ramming the Union ship. With its gun ruined in the collision, Warley backed up the Manassas for another strike, but his first attack had done less damage than hoped. The chains hung over the side of Brooklyn had protected it, and it steamed onwards, leaving Manassas in its wake.

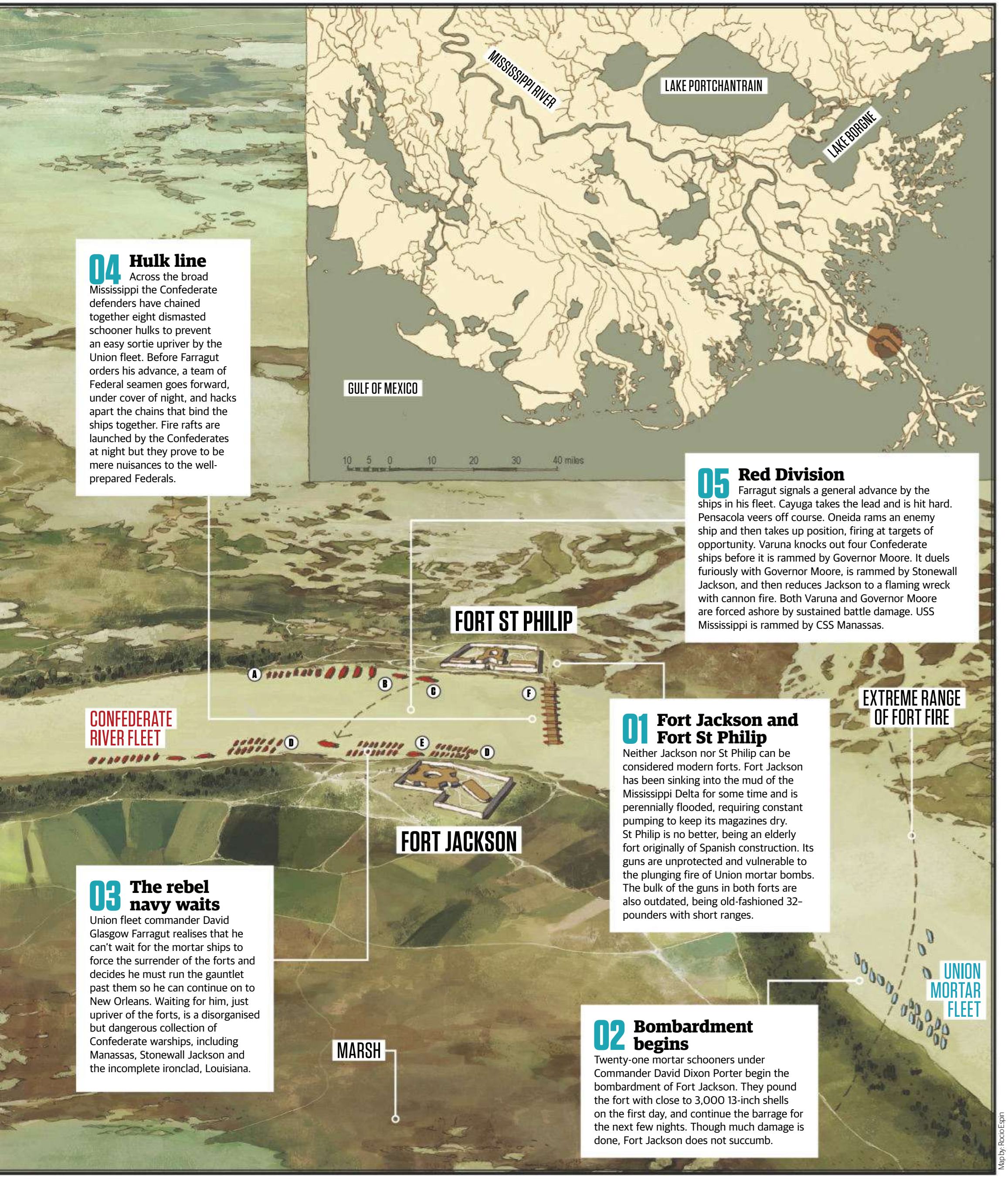
Aboard Hartford, Farragut struggled to guide his ships past the forts. At around 4.15am, a Confederate tug, Mosher, had nudged a fire raft against Hartford's portside hull. Hartford's guns annihilated the impudent little boat, but the screw sloop was now itself aflame. Fire parties worked furiously to fight the blaze, and the flagship continued to move ahead. Farragut noticed that Confederate fire had begun to lessen. Hartford was, at last, past the forts, but was not altogether safe. Lieutenant Warley in Manassas had found them. The vengeful steam frigate Mississippi, which had also made it past the forts, was looking for a rematch.

Mississippi fired its guns twice at Manassas, which had been so damaged in its earlier battles that it could hardly keep up the fight. Warley grounded his ship on the riverbank, got his crew off, and set his stricken ship alight, even as the pursuing Mississippi continued to rake its hull with lethal grapeshot.

Almost all of Farragut's ships managed to find a way past the forts, which quit their own firing at about 5.30am. His fleet arrived at the defenceless New Orleans the next day, on 25 April. The forts held out for another two days, under bombardment by the mortar ships, until they too surrendered on 27 April. By 1 May, Butler's US Army troops had come up and had begun the occupation of the city.

18-24 APRIL 1862

MISSISSIPPI RIVER
MARSH
BAY
07 Manassas strikes again... and again
Brooklyn makes it upriver past Fort St Philip but is attacked and rammed by CSS Manassas. Fortunately, the improvised chain mail armour hanging over its side prevents crippling damage and it leaves Manassas behind it. After a brief lull, Manassas returns to the fight further upriver, but is run off by USS Mississippi, which hammers the pesky Confederate ram with gunfire. Manassas grounds ashore and is set on fire by its commander.
08 On to New Orleans
With the bulk of his fleet past the line of the forts, Farragut heads further up the Mississippi towards New Orleans, which he reaches the next day. The city is undefended. Forts Jackson and St Philip capitulate two days later.
06 Blue Division
Aboard Hartford, Farragut pushes upriver. Brooklyn is caught in the remains of the hulk line and is struck by heavy Confederate gunfire. The Confederate tug Mosher is destroyed by Hartford, but not before it places a blazing fire raft against the Union screw sloop. Farragut's men fight the fire and soon Hartford is past the forts.
A. BARGES
B. MCRAE
C. LOUISIANA
D. FIRE BARGES
E. MANASSAS
F. SCHOONER RAFT
N
BAY



04 Hulk line

Across the broad Mississippi the Confederate defenders have chained together eight dismasted schooner hulks to prevent an easy sortie upriver by the Union fleet. Before Farragut orders his advance, a team of Federal seamen goes forward, under cover of night, and hacks apart the chains that bind the ships together. Fire rafts are launched by the Confederates at night but they prove to be mere nuisances to the well-prepared Federals.

05 Red Division

Farragut signals a general advance by the ships in his fleet. Cayuga takes the lead and is hit hard. Pensacola veers off course. Oneida rams an enemy ship and then takes up position, firing at targets of opportunity. Varuna knocks out four Confederate ships before it is rammed by Governor Moore. It duels furiously with Governor Moore, is rammed by Stonewall Jackson, and then reduces Jackson to a flaming wreck with cannon fire. Both Varuna and Governor Moore are forced ashore by sustained battle damage. USS Mississippi is rammed by CSS Manassas.

01 Fort Jackson and Fort St Philip

Neither Jackson nor St Philip can be considered modern forts. Fort Jackson has been sinking into the mud of the Mississippi Delta for some time and is perennially flooded, requiring constant pumping to keep its magazines dry. St Philip is no better, being an elderly fort originally of Spanish construction. Its guns are unprotected and vulnerable to the plunging fire of Union mortar bombs. The bulk of the guns in both forts are also outdated, being old-fashioned 32-pounders with short ranges.

03 The rebel navy waits

Union fleet commander David Glasgow Farragut realises that he can't wait for the mortar ships to force the surrender of the forts and decides he must run the gauntlet past them so he can continue on to New Orleans. Waiting for him, just upriver of the forts, is a disorganised but dangerous collection of Confederate warships, including Manassas, Stonewall Jackson and the incomplete ironclad, Louisiana.

02 Bombardment begins

Twenty-one mortar schooners under Commander David Dixon Porter begin the bombardment of Fort Jackson. They pound the fort with close to 3,000 13-inch shells on the first day, and continue the barrage for the next few nights. Though much damage is done, Fort Jackson does not succumb.

Map by: Rocio Espin

What If...

THE RENAISSANCE NEVER HAPPENED?

Between the 14th and 17th century, a new interest in classicism changed Western art forever

Written by Callum McKelvie

INTERVIEW WITH

RICHARD LLOYD

Richard Lloyd is a writer and researcher with an interest in the Italian Renaissance, particularly in relation to the city of Florence. He has studied at Winchester College, the British Institute in Florence and Oxford University.

©Richard Lloyd

What is the Renaissance?
Literally, Renaissance means 'Rebirth', but it is the revival of the styles of Roman and Greek (Classical) architecture and sculpture, and of interest in their mythological culture of gods and goddesses and stories of people affected by them. Rome's influence over Italy was reduced by the Gothic devastation of the city in the sixth century. By the ninth century the Romanesque style of architecture began to spread around Italy, not reviving classical Roman styles but using rounded arches, not pointed Gothic ones. By the 15th century the Renaissance revival of Classical styles began. Writer John Fowles stated: "In essence the Renaissance was simply the green end to one of civilization's hardest winters. It was an end to chains, bounds, frontiers. Its device was the only device: what is, is good."

Can you tell us about Florence's role in the Renaissance?
Florence was the city in Italy that had the most powerful role in the Renaissance. It became prosperous from its development of dyes to colour wool and silk, and the manufacture of colourful clothing. This funded many families, of which several developed banks to finance their international trade. The Medici family was one of the wealthiest and became rulers of the city. They recruited Greek scholars to the university, and to tutor their friends, and many Florentines paid artists to revive Classical styles and subjects. Several families provided lavish funding for large amounts of art and architecture, leading to Florence being the centre of the development of art for several centuries and the home of the world's most famous artists.

What, in your opinion, are some of the key works of the Renaissance?
Filippo Brunelleschi was the architect who was most influential in reviving the Classical style. The churches that he designed, San Lorenzo and Santo Spirito, the chapel of the Pazzi at the church of Santa Croce, and the hospital of the Innocenti, were all built with Classical columns and Corinthian and Ionic capitals. His most famous piece of architecture is the dome of the cathedral of Florence, with a Classical lantern and arcades, called the upper tribunes, supporting the drum beneath the dome.

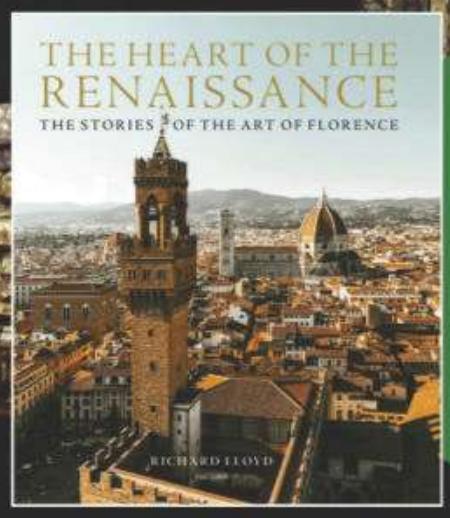
Another famous architect is Leon Battista Alberti, whose attractive Palazzo Rucellai has Classical capitals on all the pilasters on its facade. Donatello's sculptures, in particular, his bronze *David*, and Antonio del Pollaiuolo's paintings and sculptures of Hercules, are also key works of the Renaissance. Giambologna is another sculptor, known

Image source: wiki/ The Yorck Project

Main image source: © Getty Images

RIGHT
Botticelli's *The Birth Of Venus*, 1480s

VACANCY



The Heart of the Renaissance **by Richard Lloyd is available now from Unicorn Publishing**

THE PAST

12th – 18th century

WHO WERE THE MEDICIS?

If one family can be held responsible for the Renaissance it is the Medicis, who rose to prominence in the 12th century after emigrating from the village of Caffagiolo to Florence. Using their influence in banking and commerce, they soon became one of the most prominent ruling families in Florence and later Tuscany. During the family's centuries of dominance, many of its sons and daughters would become of historical importance. Some of the most notable include Catherine De Medici (who became the wife of Henry II of France and would play a key role in the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre of 1572) along with four popes: Leo X, Clement VII, Pius IV and Leo XI. During the Renaissance, the Medicis' wealth allowed them to function as patrons to numerous artists and helped create works such as the Sistine Chapel, the Duomo of Florence and St Peter's Basilica. Crucially, the Medici family's skill at diplomacy created a peaceful environment in which art was able to flourish. The family commissioned Michelangelo to build the famous Medici tombs, which took nearly 15 years to complete. The famous sculptor also lived in the palace of Lorenzo de' Medici as a young man, studying under the guidance of Donatello.

Image source: wiki/ Musée Carnavalet

1501

MICHELANGELO AND DAVID

Considered the greatest artist of his time, Michelangelo di Lodovico Buonarroti Simoni has had an unparalleled effect on the history of Western art. Despite being known mainly as a sculptor, his most famous work is perhaps the paintings on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. However, his *David* is equally one of his most well-known works. In the 15th century a large stone block was brought to Florence from Carrara in Tuscany. For years, the Opera del Duomo sought someone to conquer the block but many artists, including Agostino di Duccio and Antonio Rossellino, tried and failed to sculpt it. In 1501, Michelangelo was officially commissioned and spent three years working on the statue.

Image source: wiki/ Metropolitan Museum of Art, online collection (The Met object ID 436771)

for his *Fountain of Neptune*, *Rape of the Sabines*, and bronze *Mercury*. Botticelli's paintings for the Medici family with Classical themes or subjects – *Primavera*, *The Birth Of Venus*, and *Pallas And The Centaur* – are similarly well-regarded. Perhaps the most celebrated are the works of Michelangelo. His most famous paintings are in the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican in Rome, but his most famous sculpture, *David*, is in Florence.

How much did the Italian Renaissance rely on surviving Classical works?

Architects were influenced by the remains of ancient temples and triumphal arches in the forum of Rome. Brunelleschi went there to study them, as did Alberti, who wrote an influential book on Classical architecture. Sculptors were influenced by statues of Roman emperors and by the statue of Laocoon, which was discovered in Rome in 1506 and copied by Baccio Bandinelli. Michelangelo's *David* was inspired by sculptures of Hercules and his bust of Brutus by the third century bust of Emperor Caracalla. Hardly any Classical paintings survived but many artists put Classical architecture into their paintings. This was especially true of Domenico Ghirlandaio in his frescoes of scenes of the lives of the Virgin Mary and St John the Baptist in the Tornabuoni family's chapel in the church of Santa Maria Novella.

Can you tell us something of the other important families in Florence?

While the Medici are the most famous family of Florence, because they became the grand dukes of Tuscany, several other families sponsored significant amounts of art. The Peruzzi and Bardi families both had international banking businesses and developed substantial areas of buildings in the 13th century, in the Piazza de' Peruzzi and the Via de' Bardi. Both of these families commissioned Giotto, Florence's most famous early Renaissance painter, to fresco their chapels in the Franciscan church of Santa Croce in the early 14th century. The Peruzzi chapel has scenes of the lives of St John the Baptist and St John the Evangelist, and the Bardi chapel has scenes of the life of St Francis. The Brancacci family sponsored the frescoes in their chapel in the church of Santa Maria del Carmine, painted by Masolino and Masaccio in 1424-7. These were so admired by future Florentine artists that many went there to copy

2x © Getty Images

"Brunelleschi's rediscovery of perspective was followed by many Renaissance artists"

ABOVE
Lorenzo de' Medici, one of the key patrons during the Renaissance

their designs. The Rucellai family employed the architect Alberti to design their handsome Classical-style palazzo and their grand loggia in the piazza in front of it. Alberti also designed a tomb for Giovanni Rucellai in the chapel in the church of San Pancrazio, based on the Holy Sepulchre of Christ in Jerusalem but decorated with Classical pilasters. The Rucellai family also commissioned Alberti to design the famous facade of the Dominican church of Santa Maria Novella. The Strozzi family built two palazzi in Florence. The major one, called the Palazzo Strozzi, was one of the grandest Renaissance buildings, built from 1489 to designs by Benedetto da Maiano and Simone del Pollaiuolo. As early as 1350, the banker Tommaso Strozzi, whose uncle Pietro was prior of the monastery at Santa Maria Novella, commissioned a couple of brothers from the Cione family to fresco a chapel in Santa Maria Novella, with illustrations of the Last Judgement derived from Dante's imagination in his *Divine Comedy*. At the end of the 15th century, Filippo Strozzi commissioned Filippino Lippi to fresco another chapel in Santa Maria Novella

with scenes of the lives of St John the Evangelist and St Philip. The Corsini family began to build a massive Baroque-style palazzo on the bank of the River Arno in 1656. They also built a chapel in the church of Santa Maria del Carmine to celebrate their ancestor Bishop Andrea Corsini, who had been canonised as a saint. It had dramatic relief panel sculptures made by Giovanni Battista Foggini, Florence's best Baroque sculptor.

Why was the introduction of perspective so important?
Roman artists understood perspective and used it in their frescoes on the buildings of Pompeii and Herculaneum, but these were not discovered until the volcanic lava of Mount Vesuvius was removed in the 19th century. Neither Byzantine nor Gothic artists used it, so their paintings and mosaics are mainly flat and do not have landscapes or buildings in their backgrounds. The rediscovery of perspective by Filippo Brunelleschi was followed by many Renaissance artists. These included Donatello in one of his relief sculptures, of St George slaying the Dragon, and especially by Masaccio, in the urban backgrounds of his frescoes in the Brancacci Chapel in Santa Maria del Carmine, and in the chapel background of his Holy Trinity fresco in Santa Maria Novella. Masaccio's style was so much admired by Florentine artists that his accurate use of perspective was followed by many of them.

ABOVE
Brunelleschi's famous dome at the Cathedral of Santa Maria del Flore

BELOW
Leonardo Da Vinci's *Vitruvian Man*, demonstrating the proportions of the human body

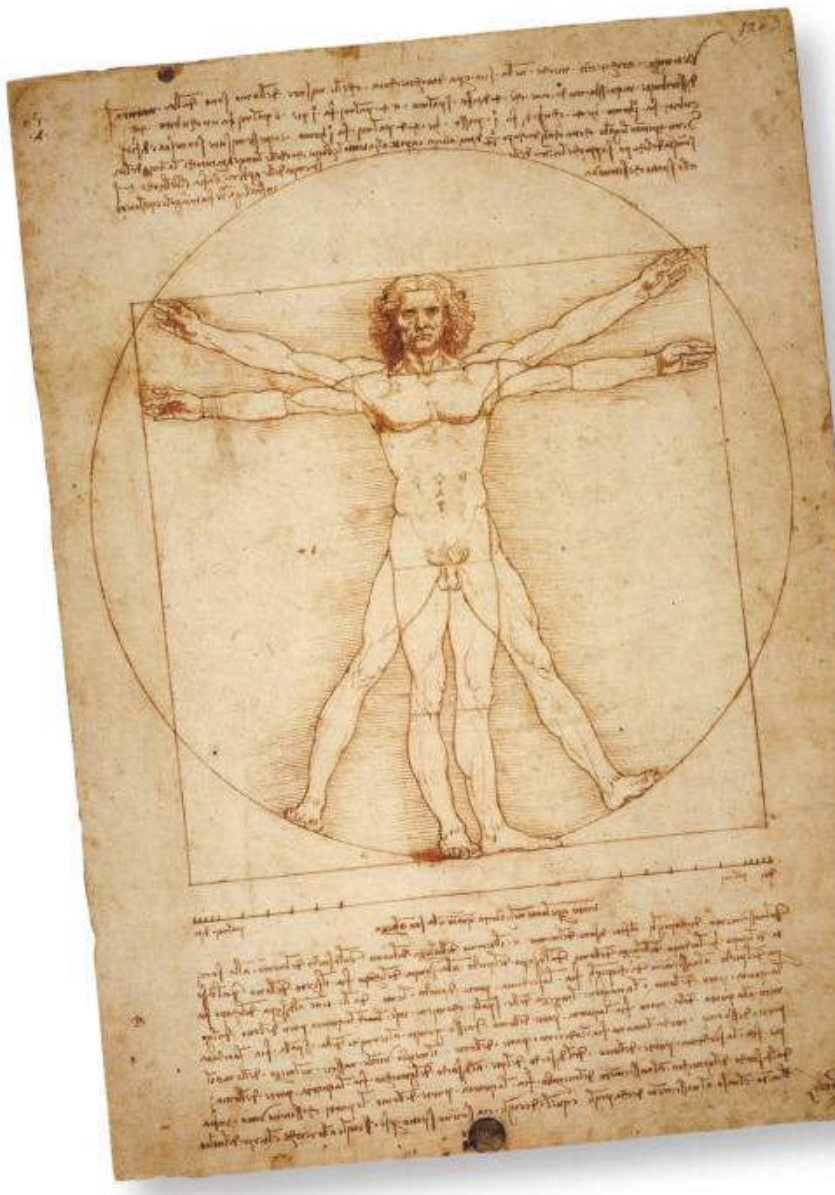


Image source: wiki/ Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice

How important to art history is the Renaissance?
The strictly Classical styles of the Renaissance period were altered by the Mannerist and then Baroque styles, which included vigorous motion and dramatic lighting and colour into pictures, and decorative elements into architecture. But the Classical styles were revived in Neoclassical art and architecture in the 18th and 19th centuries in cities all around Europe. The greatest of all Italian Renaissance artists – Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo and Raphael – are the most famous of all artists.

Were there any other similar artistic movements which could have taken its place?
Gothic art and architecture was very widely influential, but was displaced by Renaissance styles until the 19th century. Gothic paintings mainly had gilded backgrounds but did not have perspective – that was revived in the Renaissance by Brunelleschi and several others. Gothic architecture always has pointed arches and doesn't have the regularity of Classical designs

What could the effect on the history of art have been if there had been no Renaissance?
The Renaissance is one of the most interesting eras in the history of art, because of its revival of illustrations of Classical mythology, of elegant and carefully proportioned architecture, and of Greek sculptures of handsome naked men. Without it, many European cities would be much less attractive.

THE POSSIBILITY

12th – 16th century

GOTHIC ART

Evolving from Romanesque art, Gothic art wasn't named as such until the Renaissance and its renewed interest in Classical works. The style was named due to its perceived ugliness being attributed to the style invented by the Barbarian Gothic tribes who played a role in toppling the Roman Empire. As such, popular opinion regarding Gothic style was almost uniformly derogatory until the 19th century when a revival took place. If the Renaissance interest in Classical art forms and styles had not taken place, it is possible that the Gothic style could have continued uninterrupted – though doubtless it would have been replaced at some point, if not necessarily by Classicism.

18th century

THE BIRTH OF NEOCLASSICAL ART

The late 18th century saw further renewed interest in the ancient world, due partially to the relatively new science of archaeology. Professional illustrators documented discoveries, such as the ruins of Athens, in pamphlets. Eventually this obsession with Classicism would result in the Grand Tour, in which wealthy young men were encouraged to travel to Europe to gain knowledge of art, architecture and Classical culture. The Neoclassical movement built upon the Renaissance interest in proportion and simplicity, as opposed to the excess of medieval Gothic works. Without the Neoclassical emphasis on formal composition and historical subject matter, the history of Western art would've been very different.

2x ©Getty Images

Through History

NATIONAL TRUST TREASURES

We peek into the vaults of the National Trust and share some of its fascinating items

Mainimage: © National Trust Images

Founded on 12 January 1895, the National Trust has spent the past 125 years forging a reputation for the restoration and care of historic buildings and places. Now it's not only one of the UK's most prestigious historical organisations, but also one of its largest charities. There are currently 1,255km of coastline, over 248,000 hectares of land and over 500 historic houses, castles, ancient monuments, gardens, parks and nature reserves under the care and protection of the Trust. Within these numerous buildings it has also accumulated a wealth of objects and artefacts, many of untold historical importance.

125 Treasures From The Collections Of The National Trust is a new book showcasing some of these objects and a fascinating way to appreciate these items while many of their locations remain closed. From ancient worlds to the 20th century, from classical paintings to more contemporary sculptures, a wide collection of cultures and styles are represented. Each is presented alongside beautiful photographic illustrations and descriptive text explaining the history of the object. As the title suggests, 125 items in total are featured within the book – a few of which we're delighted to show here.

ROBERT CLIVE'S CAT

Purchased by Robert Clive of India in 1774, little is known about this unique sculpture's origins. Believed to be Roman, this is intriguing as cats are rarely depicted in Roman art. Some researchers believe it could be based on an earlier Greek statue.

© National Trust Images/David Brunetti

BRONZE BUST OF GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

The relationship between Auguste Rodin and George Bernard Shaw is one that continues to fascinate art lovers. Rodin created many busts of Shaw but this large bronze sculpture is one of the most famous.

© National Trust Images/John Hammond

GODOLPHIN DOLPHINS

These carved wooden dolphins were probably crafted to sit upon helmets displayed at the funerals of prominent members of the Godolphin family, demonstrating terrible puns are not a recent phenomenon. As well as a pun on the family name, the symbol was said to have been chosen as the Godolphins owned large swathes of the Cornish coast.

© National Trust Images/David Brunetti

THE LOST PRINCE

Diego Velázquez's portrait depicts six-year-old Prince Baltasar Carlos (1629-46) in simple hunting clothes. The heir to the Spanish throne tragically died at 16. Velázquez painted several portraits of the young royal.

© National Trust Images/John Hammond

PROUD PUGG

A striking portrait of a favourite family pet, named Pugg or Old Vertue (c.1700), showing the Dutch Mastiff against the skyline. One of the many pets of the Booth family, several other portraits of dogs survive at the family's Durnham Massey mansion.

© National Trust Images/John Hammond

THE FIRST ENGLISH GLOBE

The Molyneux globe (named after its creator Emery Molyneux) is the first English globe and the only surviving example, dating from 1592. The globe includes images of a sea monster and a Siren to represent the dangers of the ocean.

© National Trust Images/John Hammond

PICTURE OF POVERTY

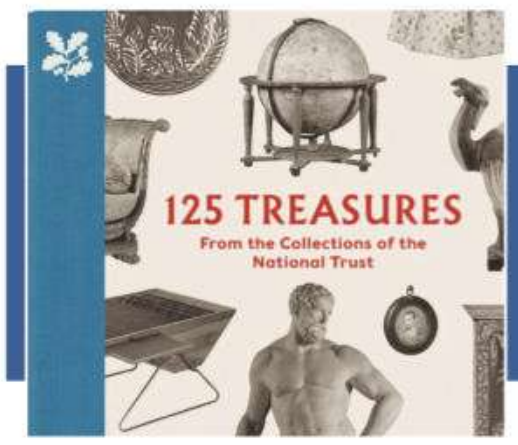
A particularly haunting image, this painting (c.1665) by Bartolomé Esteban Murillo shows an urchin boy laughing and mockingly pointing at a poor woman. The jeering face of the boy, meeting the eyes of the viewer, creates an uncomfortable experience for the audience.

© National Trust Images/Angelo Hornak

SIMPLICITY AND ELEGANCE

Part of the furniture of 'The Homewood', the stylish house created by modernist architect Patrick Gwynne for his parents. This particular magazine table dates from the 1960s and portrays Gwynne's desire for simple and elegant design.

© National Trust Images/David Brunetti



125 Treasures From The Collections Of The National Trust is available through *nationaltrust.org.uk/shop*, priced at £10

REVIEWS

The books, TV shows and films causing a stir in the history world this month

Image source: Dogwoof

MLK/FBI

An eye-opening film exposing US government paranoia and institutional racism

Certificate: 12 **Director:** Sam Pollard **Cast:** David Garrow, Clarence B Jones, Donna Murch **Released:** Out now

Watching Sam Pollard's documentary *MLK/FBI* is like walking around a museum exhibition with a headset on or sitting down in a dark gallery space to watch an installation piece. It uses digitally restored archive material combined with the voices of people who knew Martin Luther King Jr alongside historians of the civil rights movement and J Edgar Hoover's 48-year tenure fronting the FBI. But the approach is only partly successful. The jumble of narrators creates a peculiar distancing effect as they don't physically appear on screen until the very end. For a general audience their names, credited whenever they begin to speak off-screen, might not carry much weight at all. Pollard's use of audio commentary is somewhat alienating, certainly unsatisfactory.

Quibbles aside, *MLK/FBI*'s strength and great educational value is in its shattering use of exposé. It shows how government agents colluded against and feared the demands for social justice from oppressed people, puncturing the myth that the American dream was for everybody born under the star-spangled banner. It's fascinating to discover MLK's brand of non-violent protest displeased most of the American public. In the eyes of obsessively controlling Hoover and most of white America, MLK asking for equal rights was simply asking for too much.

Impeccably edited and visually gripping, this is the first film to really document on screen the extent to which Hoover and his agency harassed and spied on King. It utilises newly unearthed documents and audio recordings released via the Freedom of Information Act and the National Archives (though full tape recordings from thousands of hours-worth of wire taps won't be available until 2027). Pollard has reconstructed a disturbing period of white paranoia and vindictive behaviour, while reinforcing King as a brave individual who refused to back down.

MLK was indeed an extraordinary man, but he was not a perfect man. The documentary covers his peccadillos head on, as well as reminding us, through emotive scenes of videotaped rallies and television interviews, what an amazing orator he was. His words, his humanity, his courage, they hit like sledgehammer blows to our collective complacency. In these moments, Pollard's film displays such raw power. Of course, the FBI thought they'd struck gold when they discovered their target was conducting extra-marital affairs with numerous women, as if it undermined the moral cause to see equality under the law established. But it was only ever a sideshow distraction, never a 'gotcha' moment.

Idolised for his accomplishments achieved through non-violent action and protest, *MLK/FBI* correctly rubbishes any attempts at flagging contradictions between his private life and the cultivated image and personality captured on film and on television. That he had an eye for the ladies, routinely cheated on his wife and maybe even took part in sex parties, doesn't so much as confuse the portrait as impart a valuable lesson: no person, not even those we revere, is a saint. ***MC***

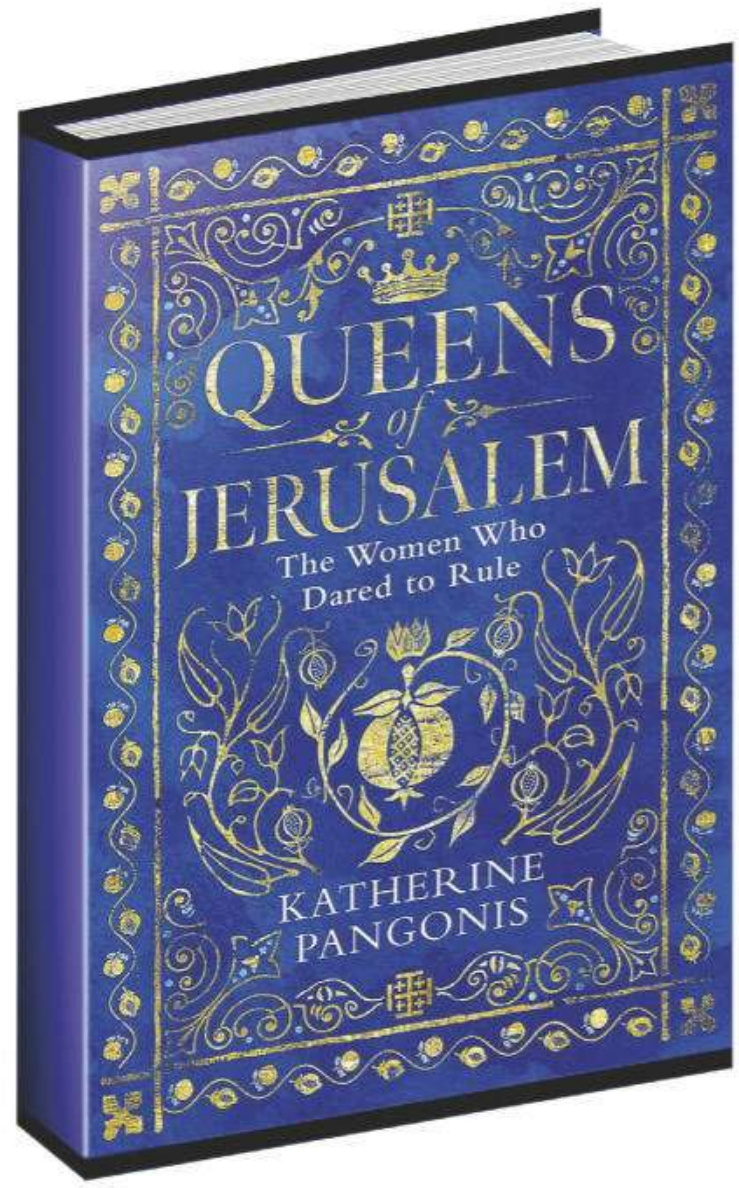
★★★☆☆

Reviews by
Martyn Conterio, Jessica Leggett, Catherine Curzon

QUEENS OF JERUSALEM

A much-needed study of history's overlooked yet trailblazing royal women

Author Katherine Pangonis **Publisher** Weidenfeld & Nicolson
Price £20 **Released** Out now



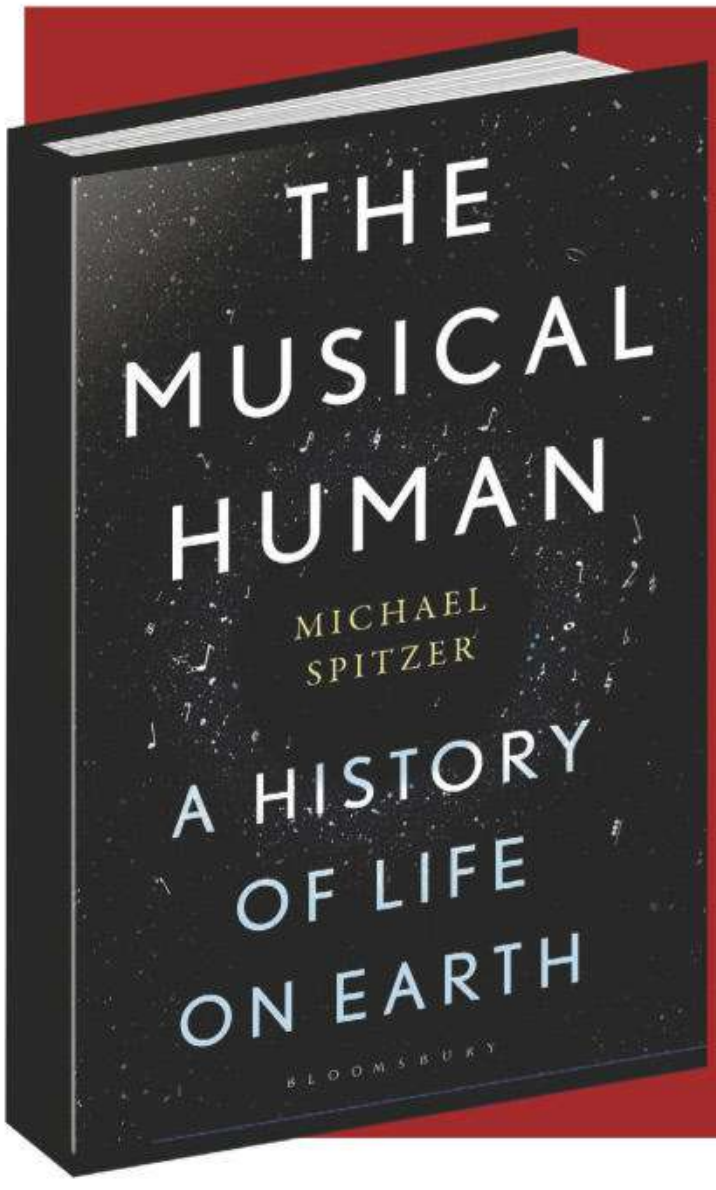
In her debut book *Queens of Jerusalem: The Women Who Dared to Rule*, historian Katherine Pangonis brings to life the stories of the female rulers of the Outremer (also known as the Crusader States) who have thus far been dismissed by history.

The early or unexpected deaths of male rulers, their many daughters but lack of sons and the volatility of the Outremer meant that many aristocratic women – primarily remembered for their roles as wives, mothers and daughters – had the opportunity to wield real power and independence for themselves in a patriarchal world.

Among the women that we learn about in this narrative-driven biography are Queen Melisende, the first queen regnant of Jerusalem, who refused to cede power to her son and co-ruler, Baldwin III, when he became of age. Her sister, the widowed Princess Alice of Antioch, led rebellions in an attempt to become regent for her daughter, Constance. As a young woman, a widowed Constance would arrange her second marriage herself, defying those around her who tried to marry her off – just like her contemporary, Eleanor of Aquitaine.

Pangonis does an excellent job of contextualising the circumstances that led these women to forge their own alliances and make shrewd political and military decisions to seize power, both successfully and unsuccessfully. It is an impressive feat, considering that the majority of them are barely mentioned in existing historical sources. This book is an enjoyable read that finally addresses the crucial role of royal women in crusader history. ***JL***

★★★★★



THE MUSICAL HUMAN

A musical history of life on Earth

Author Michael Spitzer **Publisher** Bloomsbury **Price** £30 **Released** 1 April 2021

This is a history book like no other. From the dawn of humanity to the modern era, *The Musical Human* takes readers on a journey through the centuries to examine the complex relationship between humankind and music. In this impressive new work Michael Spitzer argues that music is fundamental to humanity, and he makes a persuasive case for that theory.

The Musical Human doesn't try to argue that one form of music is superior to another, nor does it require its readers to have an extensive knowledge of the subject; it's certainly not a work that only musicians will enjoy. In fact, at the very heart of the book is the point that music is universal. One can respond to music regardless of background, knowledge or ability. It is something that can unite or divide, and a shared experience that communicates across the centuries.

Spitzer is an immensely able and humorous guide, leading the reader on a journey that crosses through eras and cultures to tell a story that encompasses a vast range of disciplines. This weighty book is packed with information, but it never loses focus and the pace never flags. It is entertaining, informative and philosophical, and it offers the reader much to think about. This is a book that should appeal to a broad range of readers, and it will be as rewarding to those with no knowledge of music as it will be to those who cannot imagine life without it. An essential read. ***CC***

★★★★★

Out now!

Book Of Death

What is death, and what actually happens when we die? While we can't answer these questions, it can be reassuring to learn about how death is perceived not only in other cultures, but how beliefs and rituals have evolved over the centuries. Trace the remarkable history of death and find out how science can help us to understand and demystify our fate in this new book.

Buy *Book Of Death* in shops or online at
magazinesdirect.com
Price: £15.99

HISTORY of WAR **RECOMMENDS...**

Out now!

Blood And Iron

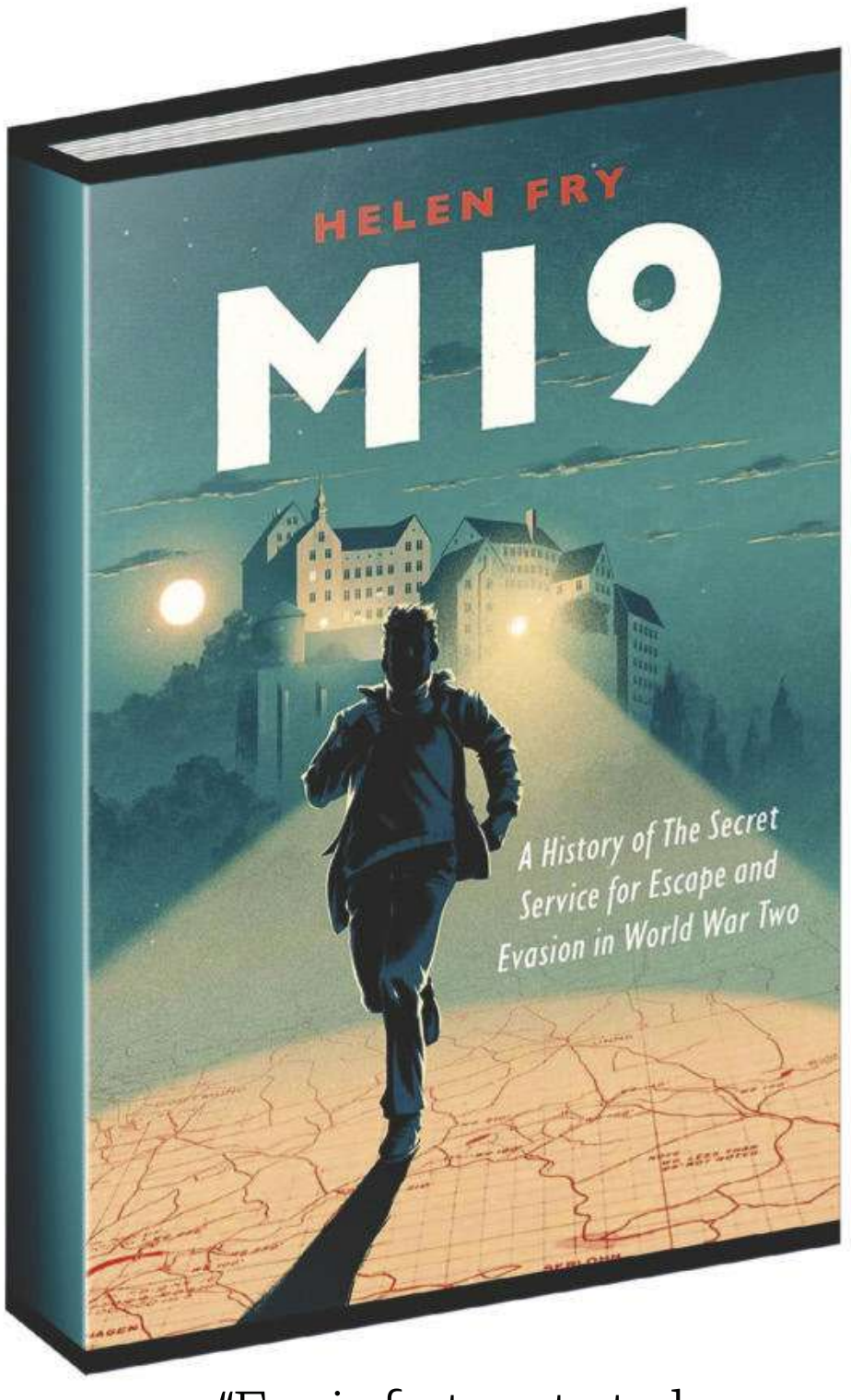
Author Katja Hoyer
Price £14.99 **Publisher** The History Press

Katja Hoyer covers the 47 years from the unification of Germany in 1871 to the November Revolution of 1918 with impressive ease. Her well-illustrated book is based on considerable research and is always lively and readable. It offers a welcome reappraisal of the Iron Chancellor, Otto von Bismarck, who dominated the fledgling German Empire. Blood and Iron is an important and highly accessible survey of Germany's Second Reich.

MI9: A HISTORY OF THE SECRET SERVICE FOR ESCAPE AND EVASION IN WORLD WAR TWO

The intriguing story of a secret wartime world

Author Helen Fry **Publisher** Yale University Press **Price** £20 **Released** Out Now



"Fry is fortunate to have enjoyed access to previously classified files"

In her latest book, *MI9: A History of The Secret Service For Escape And Evasion In World War Two*, Helen Fry tells the fascinating story of MI9, an almost forgotten branch of the Secret Service. Established in 1939, this War Office department remained in operation until 1945 and had two objectives. Firstly, MI9 offered help to escaped Allied prisoners of war attempting to flee Axis countries to safety. Secondly, it gave assistance to military personnel stranded behind enemy lines as they attempted to evade capture and reach Allied countries. In the face of terrible danger, the intelligence operatives and resistance fighters of MI9 established clandestine routes across Nazi-occupied Europe by which Allied soldiers could find their way home.

The story of MI9 is the stuff of spy fiction, and it certainly makes for a fascinating subject. Fry is fortunate to have enjoyed access to previously classified files and documents, which allows for a more in-depth study of the department than ever before. The combination of this material, eyewitness testimony and some truly breathtaking tales of heroism and survival make this a must-read for anyone with an interest in the history of the intelligence services of World War II. The narrative is peopled by some familiar names and some who will likely be less well-known to many readers.

MI9: A History of The Secret Service For Escape And Evasion In World War Two is clearly the product of an immense amount of research. What shines through most of all are the individual stories of those who put their lives on the line time after time for the sake of the war effort, not to mention the heroic Allied personnel who made such dangerous escapes and risked everything to be able to fight again. It's no criticism to say that the book sometimes reads more like spy fiction than historical truth, but such was the work of MI9.

However, we did notice some small but niggling errors that occasionally undermine its impact and authority. It also has a tendency to move back and forth through time, leading to some repetition that might have been avoided with a more linear approach. Readers with a particular interest in the intelligence services will no doubt find much to debate in Fry's assertion that the work of MI9 as an intelligence gathering organisation has been overlooked. She argues that it should be considered alongside MI5, Bletchley Park et al as a centre of military intelligence, and this is certainly an intriguing new theory that would bear some further examination.

MI9: A History of The Secret Service For Escape And Evasion In World War Two is a fascinating story, peopled with a cast of characters who readers won't soon forget. The aforementioned errors cannot go unremarked, but the extensive bibliography will reward those who wish to undertake some further research. As a history of an overlooked organisation and a celebration of some extraordinary achievements, there is much here to enjoy. ***CC***

★★★★☆

HISTORY VS HOLLYWOOD

Fact versus fiction on the silver screen

JOAN OF ARC

Director: Victor Fleming **Starring:** Ingrid Bergman, José Ferrer, George Coulouris **Country:** USA **Released:** 1948

An historical epic from Hollywood's golden age that's surprisingly accurate

B+

VERDICT: A traditional Hollywood movie with great respect for its subject

01 Ingrid Bergman was in her early 30s when she played the role of the teenage Joan of Arc. The actress also retained her Swedish accent, however growing up on the German border Joan may well have had a Germanic accent similar to Swedish.

02 The early peasant costumes of the women in the film are more 17th than 15th century, however all the armour was designed by the Metropolitan Museum of Art to guarantee its authenticity. Apparently this was at Bergman's own request.

03 Before breaking the siege of Orleans, Joan gives an impassioned speech for the English to surrender and spare themselves from battle. Much of what she says in this scene is lifted directly from the many letters Joan sent making such requests.

04 Joan goes into battle carrying her standard rather than a weapon and later inspires her troops by charging at the enemy again despite being pierced by an arrow. This is all chronicled extensively in histories and appears to be accurate.

05 In her trial, Joan confesses to save her life, but she later backtracks after promises of improved conditions are not fulfilled, such as being allowed to attend mass. She is condemned as a relapsed heretic, which trial records confirm.

Main image: © Getty Images
5x inset image source: BBC iPlayer

PRINSESSTÅRTA

Ingredients

For the sponge cake
- 200g caster sugar
- 70g cornflour
- 70g plain flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 4 eggs

For the vanilla custard
- 240ml heavy cream
- 3 tbsp cornflour
- 2 tbsp sugar
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 4 egg yolks

For the filling and topping
- 100g raspberry jam
- 480ml heavy cream, whipped
- 300g marzipan
- Green and yellow food colouring
- Icing sugar for dusting
- Marzipan or fondant pink rose and leaves

Did you know?

In Sweden there is an official princess cake week, which is celebrated annually in September

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Inset image: © Alamy

AN ICONIC CELEBRATION CAKE, SWEDEN, 1948 – PRESENT

The first recipe for prinsesstårta, also known as princess cake, was published in the 1948 edition of *Prinsessornas Kokbok: Husmanskost Och Helgdagsmat*, a cookbook by Jenny Åkerström. A home economics teacher, Åkerström was hired to give formal domestic training to Princesses Margaretha, Märtha and Astrid, the daughters of Prince Carl, Duke of Västergötland (brother of King Gustaf V). Originally called 'green cake' due to its distinctive green marzipan covering, the cake was supposedly renamed because it was a favourite of the three princesses. For over 70 years, prinsesstårta has been a popular dessert in Sweden – with around 500,000 cakes sold annually – and the sweet treat remains an absolute must-have at birthdays and other special occasions.

METHOD

01 Preheat your oven to 175°C. Grease and line a 23cm/9-inch round tin with baking parchment. Add the eggs and sugar into a mixing bowl and beat together for about five minutes until it is pale and fluffy. In a separate bowl, combine the flour, cornflour and baking powder.

02 Fold the dry ingredients into the egg mixture with a metal spoon until combined. Pour the batter into the tin and bake for around 25 to 30 minutes or until golden brown. Remove the cake from the oven and set aside to cool, before turning it out onto a wire rack to cool completely.

03 Next, start on the vanilla custard. Add the cream, cornflour, sugar and egg yolks to a small saucepan and whisk together. Cook this over a low heat while stirring constantly until the custard thickens. Stir in the vanilla extract and remove from the heat.

04 Transfer the custard to a bowl and once it has cooled slightly, cover the surface of the custard with cling film to stop a skin from forming. Place the custard in the fridge to chill.

05 To build the cake, use a serrated knife or cake leveller to cut the cake horizontally into three even layers. Place the bottom layer on a plate or cake board and spread on a layer of raspberry jam. Next, add a generous layer of vanilla custard and top with the second cake.

06 Spread the rest of the vanilla custard on the second cake layer and top with the final cake layer. Pile the whipped cream on to the final layer, covering the sides, and creating a smooth dome shape on top. Refrigerate the cake for an hour.

07 To make the cake covering, dust your work surface with some icing sugar. Knead the marzipan using your hands to soften it up, and add a tiny amount of green and yellow food colouring. Knead the marzipan until the colour is even.

08 Dust the surface again with icing sugar and roll out the marzipan into a large circle, big enough to cover the cake. Gently lift and lay the marzipan over the top of the cake, using your hands to shape it around the sides until smooth. Trim any excess.

09 To decorate, dust a light layer of icing sugar over the princess cake and top with the marzipan or fondant rose and leaves. Refrigerate the cake until serving time – ideally, it should be eaten the same day.

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